

# **Charting the Island's Future – From Here to 2030**



## *Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan*

Approved by the Planning Commission and Submitted to Town Council  
for Consideration on February 17, 2010



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# 1 Introduction

## Overview

A comprehensive plan is the foundation for growth and development in a community. It provides a baseline of existing conditions and outlines a blueprint for future development in the community, in the form of plans, maps, concepts, goals and implementation strategies. While state laws typically do not dictate how far into the future the comprehensive plan should look, twenty years is a widely accepted timeframe. Less than that is not realistic in terms of laying the blueprint for the future, and more than that is placing too much credence on assumptions about the future economy and other factors affecting a community's growth.

The Comprehensive Plan reflects the Town's desire to retain its reputation as a quality residential-resort area, maintain a sustainable economy, protect the island's cultural and natural resources, and provide for the efficient delivery of public services in a fiscally responsible manner. This plan is crafted as a dynamic guide that reflects the integral components of the community fabric and serves as a tool for community leaders to strengthen and preserve the Town's structure, culture, image and unique sense of place for residents and visitors.

## The Planning Process

South Carolina state law (the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994) requires that all Planning Commissions must develop a comprehensive plan, to guide the development and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction. State law requires that this plan must include at least the following elements: population, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, housing, land use, transportation, and priority investment. The process of developing each element must include an inventory of existing conditions, a statement of needs and goals, and implementation strategies with time frames to accomplish the goals set forth in the element.

There should be broad based community involvement in the planning process when the plan is being written. State law requires that the Planning Commission re-evaluate the comprehensive plan every five years, and update the plan every ten years. The Planning Commission must adopt a resolution recommending to Town Council that the plan be adopted. The Town Council is required by state law to hold a public hearing to receive public comments on the plan. The Council then adopts the plan by ordinance.

## Comprehensive Plan Elements

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan meets the standards of the South Carolina Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 and its updates. In accordance with this law, the plan includes the following Elements.

- Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Population
- Housing
- Community Facilities
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Recreation
- Priority Investment

## Introduction and Vision Booklet

An "Introduction and Vision Booklet" was generated to provide a summary of the planning effort that included various public participation components, leadership interviews and a cross-sectional scan across the community. It provides an overview to the Comprehensive Plan and a summary of potential strategies that will shape action and policy decisions for the Town over the next several years. It also provides the connection to the elements of the Comprehensive Plan, which follow in this document.

## 2 Cultural Resources

*The Town of Hilton Head Island envisions a community where art, music, performances and the stories of its people enhance the experience for all residents and visitors through stewardship of its unique Cultural Resources and support of the community's distinctive character.*

### Introduction

Culture is defined as the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human thought and work characteristic of a community or population. Hilton Head Island has a rich cultural heritage, including prehistoric elements and historic sites, structures, human practices, and a strong spirit of volunteerism. Modern development has spawned the emergence of new cultural trends. The Town seeks to preserve and protect its cultural heritage, recognize changing socio-economic and cultural patterns, and promote the fine arts.

This inventory and analysis of cultural resources considers three areas of existing resources: historical/cultural resources, arts, and community character.

### 2.1 Historical/Cultural Resources

Hilton Head Island is the second largest barrier island on the east coast. It is roughly 12 by 5 miles (or 29,000 acres). Due to its location near Port Royal Sound, Charleston, and Savannah, the Island played an important role in early Indian settlement, plantation agriculture, the American Revolutionary War, and the War Between the States (Civil War).

#### Origin of the Name

In 1663, Captain William Hilton sailed on the *Adventure* from Barbados to explore lands granted by King Charles II of England to the eight Lords Proprietors. In his travels, he identified a headland near the entrance to Port Royal Sound and named it "Hilton's Head". He stayed for several days, making note of the trees, crops, "sweet water" and "clear sweet air".

In 1698, the Island was granted as part of a barony to John Bayley of Ballingclough, County of Tipperary, Kingdom of Ireland. Another John Bayley, son of the first, appointed Alexander Trench as the Island's first retail agent and for a time, the Island was known as Trench's Island. In 1729, Trench sold land to John Gascoine which Gascoine named "John's Island", which later came to be known as Jenkin's Island after another owner.

In 1862, the Island's name was changed to Port Royal and lastly in 1872, the Island's official name was changed to Hilton Head Island.

#### Historical Events

During the War of 1812, British troops landed on Hilton Head and burned most of the Island homes. By 1860 there were over 20 plantations in operation. Some of these plantation names are still in use today as streets – Myrtle Bank, Talbird, Braddock Point, Leamington, Pineland, & Seabrook. The Island was populated mostly by slaves and overseers who worked the cotton, indigo, and sugar cane. Sea Island cotton was known world-wide and made the land owners very wealthy.

Shortly after South Carolina seceded from the Union and the first shots were fired on Fort Sumter, Hilton Head Island played a major role in the war. In November of 1861, the largest naval battle ever fought on the American coast was waged between the Union fleet and the Confederates. Fort Walker, which is in today's Port Royal Plantation, was overrun within hours by more than 12,000 Union troops. Many of the Island families had to evacuate their plantation homes. By 1862, with 20-30,000 Union troops, some prisoners, and escaped slaves, Hilton Head Island's population swelled to over 40,000.

Hundreds of ex-slaves flocked to Hilton Head Island, where they could buy land, go to school, live in government housing, and serve in what was called the First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers (although in the beginning, many were "recruited" at the point of a bayonet). A community called Mitchelville (in honor of General Ormsby M. Mitchel) was constructed on the north end of the island to house them. Mitchelville became the first "Freedmans" village and was settled by freed slaves.

On August 27, 1893, the Sea Islands Hurricane made landfall near Savannah, Georgia with a storm surge of 16 feet (5 m) and swept north across South Carolina, killing over a thousand and leaving tens of thousands homeless.

### **Agriculture and Maritime Activity**

Rice became a major crop in St. Luke's Parish (southern Beaufort County) after the Revolutionary War; fields were located primarily by the Savannah and New Rivers. Rice was grown for a short time on Calibogia Plantation in the 19th century, but it was not an important commercial crop on Hilton Head Island. Most historians attribute rice's failure to the lack of fresh water to flood the fields. The significance of the rice culture in South Carolina is that it provided the impetus for use of slave labor for agriculture.

Indigo, used to produce blue dye for textiles, also became a major cash crop in the South Carolina colony. Many Lowcountry planters were able to use slaves to process rice and indigo during the same season, increasing labor efficiency and profits.

The first crop of Sea Island Cotton was grown in Myrtle Bank Plantation in South Carolina on Hilton Head Island in 1790. After the boll weevils destroyed Sea Island cotton, Hilton Head's population dropped to only a few hundred, most of which were descendants of slaves. Farming, fishing, and commercial oystering were how the Hilton Head and Sea Islanders lived.

The local seafood industry has been part of Hilton Head Island and the Lowcountry since colonial times. As time has progressed this industry has faced and will continue to face many challenges including: rising fuel and labor costs, age of fleet, loss of maintenance and processing facilities, increased land values affecting waterfront access, and low prices of imported seafood.

### **Modern Development**

Electricity arrived on the Island in 1950. At this time, Hilton Head Island was still only accessible by boat. In 1956 Charles Fraser, the Father of Modern Day Development of Hilton Head Island, had a vision and created a master plan for a world class resort called Sea Pines. Also in 1956, the first bridge connecting the Island to the mainland was built. The Byrnes Bridge was a two-lane swing bridge. The swing bridge was replaced in 1982 with the existing four-lane bridge.

In 1960, Charles Fraser built the Island's first golf course, the Ocean Course in Sea Pines. In 1967 the Hilton Head airport opened, Harbour Town village was completed in 1969 and Arnold Palmer won the first Heritage Classic Golf Tournament. The Island's population in 1973-75 was around 6,000 with around 350,000 visitors annually. The Hilton Head Hospital was completed in 1975. In 1982, the population was 12,500 and there were more than 500,000 visitors. Hilton Head Island incorporated into a municipality as the Town of Hilton Head Island in 1983.

The Town of Hilton Head Island turned twenty-five years old in 2007 and had a population between 35,000 and 40,000 and was host to over 2.1 million visitors. Development for Hilton Head Island, Bluffton, and Beaufort and Jasper Counties will remain strong for many years to come due to desire to live in its environmentally planned communities and take advantage of the active outdoor lifestyle and natural beauty this area has to offer - the sandy beaches, sweeping marshes and pristine waterways.

### **Gullah Culture and Heritage**

The Gullah culture is a unique aspect of the history of the Island that could be used as an economic driver through marketing of the culture to draw tourists to the Island. The Gullah Museum could become an important visitor attraction as well as an educational piece for both visitors and residents. The recently established Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor includes the Town of Hilton Head Island. The four-state cultural heritage corridor is a congressionally designated National Heritage Area that encompasses coastal communities from Wilmington, NC, through South Carolina and Georgia, to Jacksonville, FL, and extends about 30 miles inland. These historic lands and communities have been inhabited by Gullah/Geechee people for more than three centuries. Figure 2.1 illustrates the Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.

**Figure 2.1: Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor**



Source: National Park Service 2009

### **History**

The Gullah culture started with the transportation of African slaves to the Sea Islands of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. The Sea Islands served as an excellent location for the Gullah culture because of its separation from the mainland by creeks, rivers, and marshes. The African slaves, who came from different regions in Africa, brought with them their language, culture and traditions. Because of their geographic protection from outsiders and strong sense of family and community, Gullah/Geechee people maintained a separate language and developed distinct culture patterns, which included more of the African cultural tradition than African-American population in other parts of the United States. Collectively these traditions and languages have merged into one to form Gullah. The Gullah culture has survived over the years by Gullah elders passing down the language and traditions to their children.



### **Traditions**

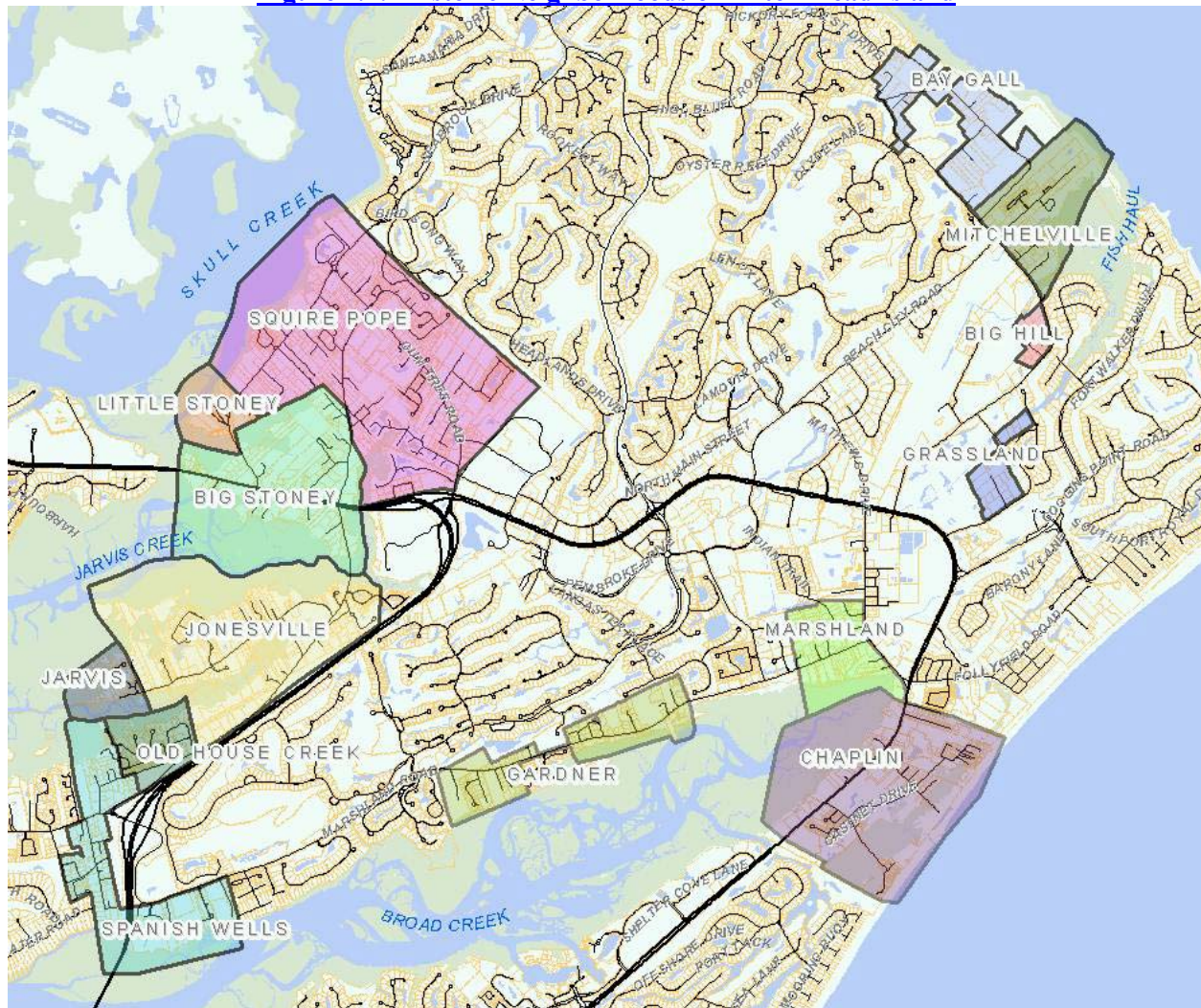
The Gullah/Geechee people of the Low Country and Sea Islands of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina are a distinctive people. They are also the only African American population of the United States with a separate, long-standing name identifying them as a separate people. They are distinct among African American peoples in this development of a tradition that depends as much upon maritime resources as upon land resources, including basket weaving and net making. Historically they are speakers of the only true African American creole language of the continental United States.

Gullah/Geechee cultural heritage, eating habits, cooking styles, music, language and traditions have made significant contributions, not only to the lives of southerners but also to all Americans. Recognizing the pivotal place that Gullah/Geechee people, language, folklore, and culture have occupied in African American scholarship.

### **Residential Settlement of Hilton Head Island**

The settlement patterns for residential areas of Hilton Head Island are primarily composed of PUDs (Planned Unit Developments), Historic Native Island Neighborhoods, and early resort style neighborhoods. The Historic Neighborhoods are illustrated in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2: Historic Neighborhoods of Hilton Head Island**



Source: Information provided by the Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association (NIBCAA) Land Management Ordinance (LMO) Committee.

## **Historic Landmarks and Archaeological Sites**

There are many historical or culturally significant properties in the Town. One structure, the Leamington Lighthouse and five sites (Mitchelville, Green's Shell, Baynard Ruins, Sea Pines-shell ring, and Skull Creek-shell ring) have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other properties are listed as potentially eligible for the National Register. There are currently no historic zoning districts or overlays within the Town other than the historic land use designations to sites within the Master Plans of the Planned Unit Developments. Figure 2.3 illustrates historic landmarks and archaeological sites located on Hilton Head Island. Additional documents and maps regarding certain sites may be found at the Heritage Library.

## **Additional Cultural Resources**

### **Heritage Library Foundation**

The Heritage Library Foundation is comprised of two main components, namely the Hilton Head Island Historical Society and the Hilton Head Island Genealogical Society Group. These cultural resources are devoted to acquiring, preserving and recording the history of the Island and its people, and to making this history available to all citizens and visitors. The Heritage Library contains more than 4,000 volumes of history and serves as a valuable resource for history, family heritage research, historic preservation, education, and community outreach. The Heritage Library is one of the most comprehensive in the region, with microfilm readers, computers, Internet access, and collections of books, microfilm, microfiche, CDs, manuscripts, periodicals, video tapes, and maps. Teams of Heritage Library Foundation members and friends work at Fort Mifflin and the Zion Chapel of Ease cemetery to preserve the remaining physical evidence of the Island's past so area residents and visitors may appreciate and understand its heritage. The Foundation assists family historians in publishing research and publishes selected manuscripts of out-of-print works from the Library's collections.

### **Education**

USCB (University of South Carolina at Beaufort) is one of the Island's major resources for higher education. It brings USC's statewide mission of teaching, research, scholarship, and public service to the rapidly growing Lowcountry of South Carolina. It is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and offers baccalaureate degrees and numerous continuing education programs. The university's degree programs respond to regional needs, draw upon regional strengths, and prepare graduates to participate successfully in local and global communities.

TCL (Technical College of the Lowcountry) serves the Island as well. One of sixteen colleges comprising the South Carolina Technical College System, the Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) traces its origin to the Mather School founded in 1868. TCL is a comprehensive, public, two-year College dedicated to serving the diverse educational needs of Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties. The College annually serves approximately 8,500 credit and continuing education students, a mix of traditional, non-traditional, full-time, and part-time. TCL provides quality, affordable academic and technical programs leading to Associate Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates.

Other adult education services are provided by Beaufort County School District, such as GED training and testing. One of the largest adult education organizations serving Hilton Head Island is USCB's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) programs. This program offers a wide variety of classes such as: philosophy, history, art, music, current events, political issues, religion, science, literature, and languages.

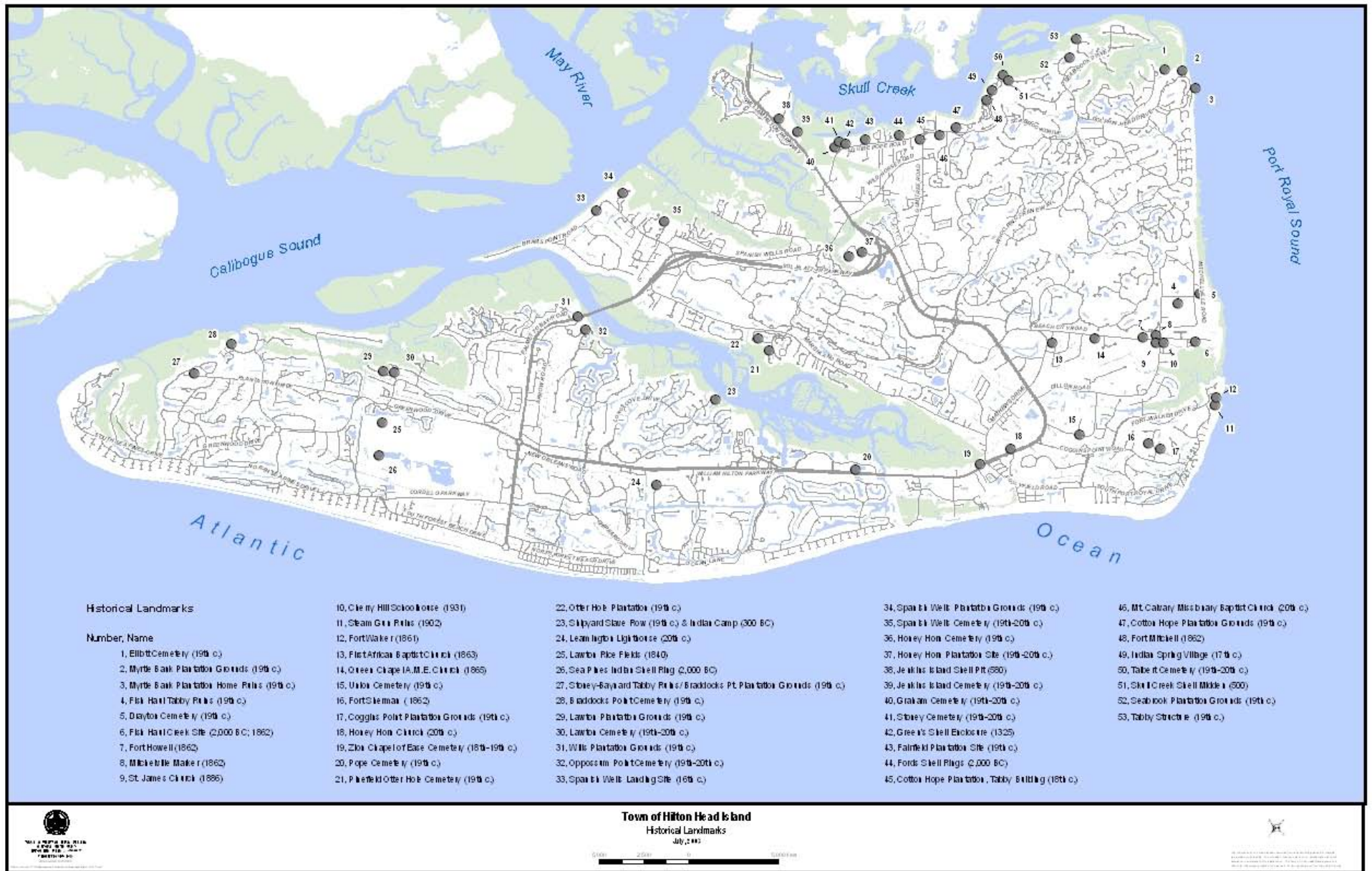
## **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Recognize the importance of the shrimping industry as part of Lowcountry history and culture by encouraging lowcountry sustainable seafood industry initiatives.
- Several studies have been completed on single archaeological sites on Hilton Head Island. The last archeological survey of the Island was completed in 1986 for the Comprehensive Plan. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan acknowledged the need for further study of the Island's historic and archeological sites.

- The Town of Hilton Head Island does not require routine archaeological assessments as part of the development approval process, except through the review of the project by the State of South Carolina, Office of Coastal Resource Management. The only protection for these sites is through the Town's Municipal Code, Chapter 2 Section 17-2-111 that states it is unlawful to damage, deface, or loot archaeological or historic sites, tombstones, and monuments.
- The 2004 Comprehensive Plan noted that historic sites behind the gates of communities should be accessible to the public for education and viewing. Current access to historic sites is limited to guided tours by the local museum (for a fee) in Port Royal, automobiles in Hilton Head Plantation (no tour buses), and for a fee of five dollars to enter Sea Pines.
- Native Island cemeteries located behind the gates of communities are currently accessible to those visiting family within the cemeteries. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan recommended that access to these historic sites and cemeteries be maintained and options researched to make these areas more easily accessible.
- Typically, Native Islanders are African-Americans who lived on Hilton Head Island before modern development and who trace their roots to Gullah slaves from central and western Africa. After the Civil War, freedmen established farms, small communities, schools, and churches throughout the Island. Several of the community names are still used to describe historic neighborhoods. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan recommended mapping these historic neighborhoods, which is shown in Figure 2.2, Historic Neighborhoods of Hilton Head Island.
- The Town's unique sense of place and character through the preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage and historical resources should be enhanced as a valuable cultural resource.



Figure 2.3: Historic Landmarks and Archaeological Sites



Source: Town of Hilton Head Island, 2009

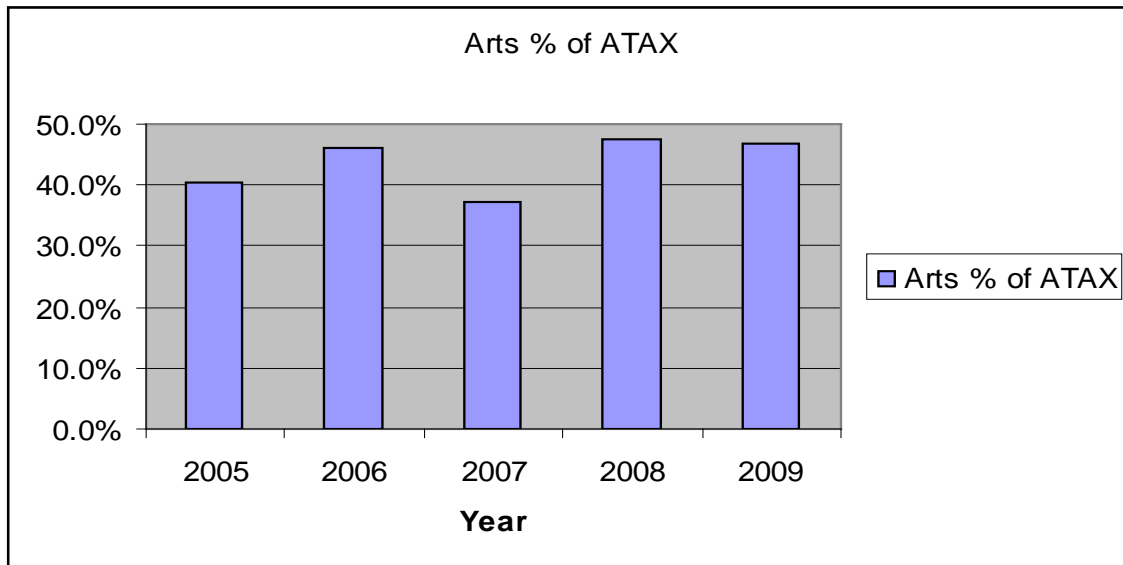


## 2.2 Arts

### Considerations for the Arts

- The fine arts play an integral role in contributing to a sense of community, and to an increased appreciation for our diverse cultures.
- Education has been identified as an important component to the arts organizations.
- Arts groups are always searching for places to display their work in such places as public buildings, displaying art on public and private properties, as well as Town parks.
- During development of this chapter participants from various agencies and organizations identified specific needs. Each group voiced different needs; however, all groups agreed there is a need for expanded arts facilities for larger performances, additional education, and gallery space to display work.
- There are currently 12 venues on the Island utilized by various arts organizations. These venues have a seating capacity that range from 73 seats to 1030 seats for an indoor facility and over 5,000 seats for an outdoor facility. Current arts organizations feel they are limited by capacity constraints of available facilities. Current arts organizations also feel their repertoire and quality of their performances are limited by the available venues.
- There are approximately 12 Performing Artist Organizations, 18 Visual Artist Organizations, and 8 Cultural Resource Organizations serving our community. There is no one unified group that serves all the groups. This results in each organization requesting assistance to meet only their individual needs when it comes to financing and venues. The organizations recognize the need to work collectively to reach goals and provide improved coordination. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan called for the creation of a Cultural Committee to promote all cultures through art.
- The arts and cultural festivals are how we gather in this community, to come together and celebrate our heritage in arts, food, wine, etc. In the past five years between 37 and 47% (a total of \$5,513,843) of the Town's ATAX (Accommodations Tax) money has gone to support arts and cultural groups on the Island.

**Figure 2.4: Percentage of ATAX dollars awarded to Arts: 2005-2009**



Source: ATAX Data 2005-2009

**Table 2.1: Hilton Head Island Arts Venues**

VENUE	CAPACITY	WHO USES	COMMENTS/CONCERNS
First Presbyterian Church	950	Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra, Hilton Head Choral Society	Stage not large enough, not built for acoustics, not large enough
Hilton Head High School	650	Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra	Managed by school so school activities get priority, difficult to get reserved
Arts Center	318	Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra, Hilton Head Dance Theatre, Hilton Head Island Barbershoppers	Arts Center has 5 productions a year that run 3-6 weeks each and 6 shows a year that have 1-3 performances each
Shelter Cove Park	2,500	Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra	All outdoor
Holy Family Church	1,030	Hilton Head Choral Society	Not large enough
St. Andrews by the Sea	400	Hilton Head Choral Society	Not large enough
Christ Lutheran Church	400	Hilton Head Choral Society	Not large enough
Main Street Theatre	235	Main Street Youth Theater	Not large enough, some need larger stage
Honey Horn	5,000+	High Tide Entertainment	Used for large outdoor concerts
Sea Pines Tennis Stadium	2,500	No longer used	High Tide used to use this facility but could not make enough money to cover the costs of the show with the limited seating
Shoreline Ballroom(Hilton Head Beach and Tennis)	Up to 1,000	Various	Construction planned to add seating up to 2,000
SC Repertory Theatre	73	Unknown	
<b>OFF ISLAND VENUES</b>			
USCB Performing Arts Center Beaufort	467	Used by other County organizations	Arts Council of Beaufort County organizes Festival Series
May River Theatre	206	Used by other County organizations	

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, 2009

**Table 2.2: Town of Hilton Head Island ATAX Award Recipients: 2005-2009**

ORGANIZATION	YEARS	TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED
Arts Center of Coastal Carolina	2005-2009	\$1,953,853
The Heritage Library	2005, 08, 09	\$75,250
Coastal Discovery Museum	2005-2009	\$1,477,750
Native Island Business & Community Affairs Association (NIBCAA)	2005-2009	\$400,000
South Carolina Repertory Company	2005-2009	\$88,705
Hilton Head Community & Youth Theatre	2005-2009	\$238,650
Hilton Head Choral Society	2005-2009	\$63,510
Hilton Head Youth Theater	2005-2009	\$56,230
The Sandbox Museum	2005-2009	\$145,550
Other (arts & cultural events)	2005-2009	\$430,645
Hilton Head Orchestra	2006, 08, 09	\$493,000
Art League of Hilton Head	2008-2009	\$90,700
ATAX FOR ARTS & CULTURAL	2005-2009	\$5,513,843 (44%)
TOTAL ATAX	2005-2009	\$12,613,409

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, 2009

### **Art in Public Places Program**

Art in public places enriches our community by engaging the eye, mind and spirit. It creates a sense of place and identifies public spaces, drawing citizens into them and provoking dialogue about what our community should look and feel like. A Town rich in public art is a museum without walls because the artworks are so accessible to our residents and visitors. Public art also helps to create high aesthetic and design standards for all types of building projects.

A public art program can integrate art and art programs into the fabric of the community by means of community participation, cultural exchange between citizens, and collaboration of various professional disciplines such as artists, design professionals, planners and developers among others.

Around the country, private developers are finding that commissioning art is good citizenship. It's also good business. By enhancing the overall quality of a project and giving it a unique character, not achievable in other ways, onsite art helps make space more rentable at higher rates. Public art often becomes a "landmark" itself, helping a project to stand out from the crowd.

### **Purpose**

The purpose is to promote and encourage private and public programs to further the development and public awareness of and interest in, the fine and performing arts and cultural properties; to increase employment opportunities in the arts; and, to encourage the integration of art into the architecture and landscapes of the community.

- It is estimated that for every \$1 invested in the arts community, \$16 in revenue is generated for the local economy.<sup>1</sup>
- Cultural facilities and opportunities are frequently listed as an important factor when a company is considering relocation. Company executives base decisions on whether or not they themselves want to live in the community.<sup>1</sup>
- A perceived lack of cultural offerings inhibits economic development efforts.<sup>1</sup>
- Cultural visitors stay an extra day and spend 50% more than other visitors.<sup>1</sup>
- Communities where artists are valued and efforts are made to help them succeed are successful at retaining and recruiting artists.<sup>1</sup>

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- There are numerous arts and cultural organizations on the Island. There is no one organization that represents the arts community as a whole.
- Arts and cultural tourism gives the Island a sense of community and provides educational benefits to both residents and visitors.
- The arts can play a role in shaping a community, enhancing unique character, and providing for expanded opportunities for economic development.

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<sup>1</sup> National Endowment for the Arts

## 2.3 Community Character

The definition of Island Character and the manner through which it's achieved is a discussion that has evolved over decades. In 1992, highly motivated by an increasing number of highly visible developments that deviated from the Island's style, the Town's CRB (Corridor Review Board), now the DRB (Design Review Board) gathered some of the most influential developers and design professionals from the Island to officially define the sense of place and design details that are characteristic of Island development. Charles Fraser, visionary and Sea Pines developer, was part of this discussion and shared his notes from the meeting with the CRB. In Fraser's notes it was clear that those involved in the development of the Island had a sincere dedication to outstanding planning and design practices. President James Barker of Clemson University mentioned that ancient Romans believed each place had its own unique spirit; it was the job of the Roman architect to understand the spirit of place by spending time in it before beginning the design, the physical manifestation of the spirit.

The rich history, beautiful beaches, pristine waterways, abundant wildlife and native vegetation of this sub-tropic barrier island presented such serene and natural beauty that developers during the mid 1900's were enticed to begin a new type of master planned community that used restrictive covenants to ensure designs were guided by the unique spirit and natural environment of each site. Characteristic of these early developments were narrow roads with separated bikeways meandering around towering live oaks, large preservations of open space, abundant recreational opportunities and a style of architecture that was born from the site itself. Structures were designed to fit within the canopies of trees, oriented to take advantage of natural light, natural views and site specific microclimates. Nature-blending indigenous materials were used to create a sense of wholeness among the natural and built environment.

As part of the 2008 Community Assessment Survey, Town of Hilton Head Island residents were asked to identify important considerations that should direct future development of the Town. The top five rated responses were as follows:

- Protecting the natural environment (97%)
- Supporting the Island's unique quality of life (93%)
- Promoting a relaxed and friendly environment (88%)
- Integrating architectural styles that blend with existing surroundings (87%)
- Preserving the culture and history of the Island (85%)

In addition, the term "Island Character" was defined by respondents of stakeholder interviews and the Community Assessment Survey as follows:

### **Architectural style that blends with surroundings**

Fraser vision "Southern" style\ low-density housing

### **Protected, pristine natural environment/ Distinct, unique Island ecosystem**

Pristine Beaches	Buffers	Tree canopies
Pristine waterways	Setbacks	Live Oaks
Salt marshes	Green spaces	Spanish Moss

### **Outdoor amenities**

Golf	Tennis	Water sports
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### **A respect for history and culture of Island**

Gullah	Southern
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### **Upscale resort/cultural activities, entertainment and recreation**

Laid-back, friendly hospitality	Low density public lighting	Unique quality of life
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The Town currently has the Corridor Overlay District and Neighborhood Character Overlay Districts that are designed to preserve Island and neighborhood character.

When Charles Fraser started the development of Hilton Head Island, he had a development concept that included 7 basic principles:

1. Do not impose development on the environment
2. Create green space for privacy
3. Keep density as low as profitably possible
4. Create roads for beauty and efficiency not just transit
5. Build no structure higher than the tallest tree
6. Cut only those trees that are absolutely necessary
7. Think always of enhancing the quality of life for those who would be residents of the Island.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- These concepts have helped to shape the Island and Community Character for Hilton Head Island and provide a guide to protect these important legacies.
- Character preservation and “sensitive renewal” have been identified as key components to guide growth, regulation and control.

## 2.5 Goals and Implementation Strategies

### Goals

#### Historical/Cultural Resources

- A. The goal is to identify historic and archaeological sites in Hilton Head Island. Various archaeological sites on Hilton Head Island are thousands of years old. A number of churches and cemeteries date back hundreds of years. Even certain modern buildings, which are products of early resort development, have character worth retaining. Without protection these areas may not be preserved into the future. These areas and structures should be recognized and preserved as important elements in the Island's historic heritage.
- B. The goal is to provide access to important historic and religious sites located inside gated communities that are currently inaccessible to the public. The Town should encourage improvement of access to these sites, while protecting them from destruction or loss.
- C. The goal is to preserve Native Island culture. Increased development and changing demographics have the potential to lead to the loss of Native Islander culture. The Town should assist Native Islanders (Gullah-freedmen descendent) culture with programs that will sustain deep ties to family-owned lands and historic neighborhoods.
- D. The goal is to encourage education about the rich cultural heritage of Hilton Head Island.
- E. The goal is to celebrate the Town's unique sense of place and character through the preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage and historical resources. The heritage and legacies of the Native Island Community is cherished and capitalized by the development of a center for Gullah studies.

#### Arts

- A. The goal is to support arts through sources such as ATAX funding. In the past the Town has contributed an average of 44% of total ATAX funds annually to the arts and cultural organizations of the Island.
- B. The goal is to create one vision for the arts and cultural community of the Island. There are numerous arts and cultural organizations on the Island, however there is no one organization that represents the arts community as a whole.
- C. The goal is to have adequate space to serve as a large arts venue with appropriate seating and layout conducive for the type of events that are held on the Island.
- D. The goal is to provide space for local artists for public display of art in parks and within buildings to display their work while adding character to the space where it is located.

- E. The goal is to understand that fine arts are an integral part of the cultural resources on Hilton Head Island, which contribute to mutual appreciation of different cultures, and promote and support those resources as necessary.
- F. The goal is to have a Public Art Program that employs goals such as the following to guide the Public Art in the Town:
- G. The Public Art Program will reflect the diverse spectrum of beliefs, cultural heritage and traditions, and artistic expressions of Hilton Head Island.
- H. The Public Art Program will include Works of Art representing a broad variety of media and styles and support community interests to have an aesthetically built environment.
- I. The Public Art Program will endeavor to provide opportunities for artists of all racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, artists with disabilities, and artists of all other diverse groups.
- J. The program will identify and pursue additional sources of funds such as a 1% fund, and donations of Works of Art to the Town.
- K. The program will develop public art projects which enhance the public spaces as well as the visual design form and content of the community; which enhance a particular neighborhood; and, which may enhance the tourist and economic potential of the Town and particular sites within the redevelopment program.
- L. The program will pursue opportunities to inform the public regarding public art including possibilities for public participation in all phases of the public art process.
- M. The program will promote the visual arts and inform and work to increase understanding within the community about the purposes and meaning of the Works of Art in the Collection.
- N. The program will inventory, document, maintain and conserve works of art in the collection, regardless of the source of acquisition.

### **Community Character**

- A. The goal is to preserve and enhance the natural and physical environments that reflect the character of the Island.

## **Implementation Strategies**

### **Historical/Cultural Resources**

- A. Conduct a Town-wide study of all archeological and culturally significant sites.
- B. Develop an historic landmarks protection program to preserve important sites and architecture on the Island. Research the need to create an ordinance, regulations, or a zoning district to offer additional protection to historical and culturally significant sites.
- C. Encourage planned communities and other landowners to provide access for family members, friends and historians to cultural and historic sites in to respect cultural dignity and allow for maintenance of historic areas
- D. Improve access to historic sites for educational purposes. Research the options of increasing the ease of accessibility to these sites for education, viewing, and maintenance.
- E. Identify historic landmarks and important archaeological sites with a Historic Resource Survey. Elements of the survey should include development approval incentives for preservation, consideration of variances to encourage rehabilitation, purchase and lease options, and moving certain structures to designated Historic Preservation Zones.
- F. Identify appropriate locations for historic markers that identify important people, places, events, and neighborhoods.
- G. Identify historic figures within Hilton Head Island to use for street naming applications. Various books and manuscripts at the Heritage Library Foundations provide extensive information on historic figures with ties to Hilton Head Island.
- H. Work on public land acquisition to preserve historic and cultural sites for future generations.
- I. Cooperate with the Coastal Discovery Museum to establish a strong Gullah cultural education component at the Honey Horn site.
- J. Promote preservation of Gullah/historical neighborhoods and historic structures to help maintain the Gullah culture.
- K. Support the goals of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor organization and promote the Gullah culture within Beaufort County and on Hilton Head Island.
- L. Promote educational programs and interpretive signage that help residents and visitors of all ages to understand the long unique history and rich cultural traditions on Hilton Head Island.
- M. Preserve the identity of traditional neighborhoods. Officially, recognize historic neighborhood names by showing their locations on Town maps, and by encouraging other mapmakers to also include the names.
- N. Increase education about Hilton Head Island's diverse cultural resources through the following:
  - i. Continue to fund educational programs and cultural celebration.
  - ii. Apply for grants to fund development of interpretive facilities and programs about cultural/historic resources.
  - iii. Coordinate with Coastal Discovery Museum and other institutions to provide educational materials and hands-on programs to schools and various subcultures to promote cultural understanding.
  - iv. Provide interpretive displays of cultural artifacts and themes at public buildings, such as Town Hall, the Beaufort County library, and Coastal Discovery Museum.
  - v. Increase awareness of the brochure created by the Chamber that includes a driving tour of important historic and archaeological sites on the Island.
- O. Preserve Native Islander and Gullah cultural history through:
  - i. Continue to provide financial support for the annual Gullah Festival through ATAX grants and other appropriate sources.
  - ii. Incorporate Native Islander history into public parks in and near their neighborhoods.
  - iii. Encourage property owners of family cemeteries to provide for the perpetual protection of the cemeteries.
- P. Provide funding and promotion of cultural events for all cultures represented on the Island, from festivals to art exhibits to prominent entertainers.



- Q. Support and improve media coverage for local arts and cultural events through an enhanced relationship with the local Chamber of Commerce and inclusion in the Town's website and newsletter.
- R. Recognize the economic value of Hilton Head Island's arts and cultural resources in tourism.
- S. Consider the creation of a Cultural Committee to promote all cultures through art and photographic exhibits, theatrical and musical performances, sporting events, etc.

## Arts

- A. Recognize and support the continued education efforts of the arts community.
- B. Evaluate public art program.
- C. Support Arts through ATAX.
- D. Evaluate need for arts master plan.
- E. Utilize Town land for arts and cultural activities.
- F. Coordinate with arts organizations for a new facility that will have a larger capacity as well as being more suitable for quality arts performances. This will help foster additional arts and cultural opportunities.
- G. Support the development of an Arts Master Plan to provide a unified position and voice for the entire arts and cultural community, which could include the creation of a Cultural Committee to support the needs and goals of the Arts Master Plan.
- H. Work with Chamber to promote arts and cultural as visitor attractors such as the BRAVO Art and Cultural Festival.
- I. Research the economic benefits and return on investment for expanding arts venues and programs as a means to attract and enrich the Island experience for residents and visitors.
- J. Support development of a Public Art Master Plan
  - i. The intent of developing guidelines is to strike a reasonable balance between allowing the future artist maximum freedom while ensuring that the art is suitable and appropriate for the site and the community.
  - ii. Most sites should be located on public property such as Town, State and County owned property, but can include private property having a high degree of public visibility within the area covered by a Public Art Master Plan.
  - iii. The Master Plan Map should consider various neighborhood identities, each defining a distinct context for public art. The Map should suggest locations appropriate for placement of public art. The purpose is to alert artist and art selection of the nature and character of each part of Town.
  - iv. The Town is concerned with the issue of visual clutter. The approach to avoid such problems on public property is to master plan public art locations. A plan should be developed that identifies in advance the publicly owned locations that are suitable and appropriate for artful public spaces.
- K. Consider Implementing a Percent for Art Density Bonus Program
 

This program would provide bonus density as an incentive to develop the facilities and the community amenities specified in an adopted public art plan. The private sector would be encouraged to invest in public art such as the following:

  - i. Allocate and spend 75% of 1%-2% of construction costs on a work(s) of art and contribute the remaining 25% directly to the Public Art Fund.
  - ii. Contribute the full 1%-2% of construction costs to the Public Art Trust Fund.
  - iii. Contribute an amount greater than 25% of 1%-2% of construction costs to the Public Art Trust Fund, and dedicate the balance to on-site artworks.

- L. Consider a Percent for Art CIP Program
  - i. Public art is a creative way to celebrate the Town's unique culture while encouraging public-private partnerships, furthering sustainability in Town projects and enhancing community pride. To compliment the numerous projects the Town funds throughout the community, it is recommended that there be established a 1% for Public Art program.
  - ii. To assist with the allocation of the 1% program funds, the Town could partner with the Public Art Committee of the Community Foundation. By working together, the two agencies should seek to reach a broad base of artists with diverse perspectives and talents, while encouraging interest in the Town as a venue for their product, and leverage Town resources.
  - iii. "Percent for Arts Program" would require public and private development to allocate 1% of total costs to the creation of public art. The private development participation could be limited to specific areas of the Town where a particular emphasis on art is envisioned.
- M. Consider Creating Arts Spaces
  - i. Finding and retaining affordable live/work space is a problem for artists, painters, sculptors, dancers, and others who require an abundance of well-lit space in which to work. Many artists gravitate to old warehouses and other industrial buildings, but their very presence in an industrial neighborhood often acts as a catalyst, setting in motion a process of gentrification that drives rents up and forces the artists out.
  - ii. Art space would be a Town initiative through public/private partnerships to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations. The Town should pursue this initiative through development projects, asset management activities, consulting services, and community-building activities that serve artists and arts organizations of all disciplines, cultures, and economic circumstances. By creating art spaces the Town supports the continued professional growth of artists and enhances the cultural and economic vitality of the surrounding community.

## 2.3 Community Character

- A. Preserve and enhance natural and physical environments that reflect character of the Island.
- B. Support development concepts and architectural styles that foster and promote Island and Community Character and that preserve culture or history of the Island.
- C. Protect Island Character and the authenticity of the Island experience.
- D. Formalize the Design Guide through development of a Community Design Element to improve the Comprehensive Plan.
- E. Update Design Standards with a design-oriented focus for redevelopment areas.
- F. Preserve Island and neighborhood character through approved design standards. The Town has a Corridor Overlay District and Neighborhood Character Overlay Districts that are designed to preserve Island and neighborhood character.
- G. The following components should be used to protect Island Character:
  - i. Preserve significant existing site features, trees and vegetation.
  - ii. Treat the landscape as a major element of the project.
  - iii. Provide landscaping of a scope and size that is in proportion to the scale of the development.
  - iv. Design and maintain landscaping in its natural shape and size.
  - v. Design structures appropriate for their use and neighborhood.
  - vi. Promote pedestrian scale circulation.
  - vii. Demonstrate the fundamental principles of good architectural design.
  - viii. Design structures with subtle visual impact and utilize natural colors, materials, textures and colors.
  - ix. Provide lighting that is adequate for safety and enhances the site.
  - x. Coordinate and harmonize the design of structures, parking and site amenities.
  - xi. Provide continuity of design on all facades of the building.
  - xii. Conceal visually undesirable utilities and equipment.

### 3 Natural Resources

*To protect Hilton Head Island's diverse natural resources, which are pivotal to the economic well being of the community and the high quality of life on the Island.*

#### Introduction

The most powerful natural force on earth - the ocean - formed Hilton Head Island and affects it every day. Proximity to water and the maritime environment are foremost reasons why visitors and permanent residents have been attracted to the Island. However, this proximity limits drainage, use of soils, natural vegetation, animal habitat, and development possibilities. These limits are potential conflicts with the development of the Island. A clearer understanding of natural resources will highlight the need to minimize environmental impacts from development and show where opportunities lie for safeguarding the habitat for all living things, including humans.

This element of the comprehensive plan builds on the challenges and objectives that are essential for the future preservation of natural resources in the Town of Hilton Head Island. This plan element is intended to provide the mechanism for guiding resource conservation and development in a way that is consistent with the capabilities of the natural resources, the physical limitations of the land, and the state and regional legal and use planning requirements. Critical to this preservation is the interconnectivity between quality of life and environmental health, one without the other is virtually impossible. This policy document provides background information pertaining to the Town's past accomplishments in preserving natural resources and goes one step further to outline the critical data that will help formulate new key issues and identify the strategies by which to accomplish them. The natural resource issues on Hilton Head Island were identified as fitting into one of the following categories: water quality and quantity, air quality, positive impacts of environmental protection on quality of life, environmental education, and sustainable development.

#### 3.1 Water Quality & Quantity

##### Current Policies:

- The Town has implemented drainage improvements that control stormwater to protect human safety and property. The current Town regulation requires that the first one inch of runoff be retained on site to capture the majority of stormwater-borne pollutants. Controlling the volume (quantity) of polluted stormwater that reaches tidal areas is integral to maintaining a healthy ocean/tidal ecosystem.
- The current requirement of tidal and freshwater wetland buffers helps to maintain and improve stormwater runoff retention on site. The required buffers increase runoff filtration and during the process have the ability to improve groundwater recharge rates. While existing regulations assist in improving and protecting water quality, additional site design standards could ensure that stormwater quantities entering island water bodies are reduced altogether.
- The Town of Hilton Head Island implemented a voluntary water conservation program, along with reuse of advance-treated domestic effluent, or "reclaimed water," for irrigation on golf courses and open spaces in order to decrease overall demand on aquifer resources.
- Freshwater wetlands on Hilton Head Island are protected through the Town's Land Management Ordinance. Alteration of any of these wetlands (with the exception of those located on single family lots) is prohibited without approval from the Town. Mitigation or replacement is required when any wetland alteration is allowed. This regulation is intended to ensure that the vital functions and values of freshwater wetlands are not lost on Hilton Head Island.
- The Town adopted the Broad Creek Management Plan in 2002. This study incorporated a multi-disciplinary inventory and analysis of the Broad Creek ecosystem. The plan included recommendations for improvement of land use policies (such as a decrease in impervious surfaces allowed), recreational opportunities, water quality and wildlife habitat.

**Data:**

- Water conservation initiatives are increasingly important as the PSDs (Public Service Districts) are continually challenged in meeting the Island's water demands. Current studies show that the saltwater is intruding from Port Royal Sound at a rate more than 200 feet per year. Many of the wells on the north end of the island have been abandoned due to excessively elevated chloride concentrations, several more of the Upper Floridan wells may also be made unusable in the near future.
- It is important to remember that much of the responsibility for water resource management, in terms of conservation as well as pollution prevention, lies with the individual property owner. It is much easier to reduce usage and prevent pollutants from entering the system than to find new potable sources or clean water once it is already contaminated.
- Runoff from developed areas flows into poorly flushed streams and inlets. Without sufficient stormwater retention or wetland interception, sediment and debris, nutrients, disease organisms, hydrocarbons, pesticides, and metals may contaminate natural water bodies. This contamination may harm shellfish beds and pose potential health hazards for humans. Use of conventional stormwater control methods needs to be updated. The use of traditional stormwater ponds in new developments has proven to result in incomplete treatment of runoff.
- The impervious surfaces contained within each of the 34 watersheds on the Island were calculated. Please note that the percentages for impervious surfaces represent the best available data at this time; it is a conservative estimate and in most cases the actual percentages of cover are higher. It incorporates calculations for building footprints, parking lots, tennis courts, roadways and lagoons. Cart and bike paths as well as driveways for single-family are not included in the calculations.
- Local studies have also discussed the relationship between increased buffer width and its ability to effectively remove pollutants prior to reaching adjacent water bodies. Buffers of both medium (24 ft) and large (39 ft) width possessed the highest removal efficiencies for nutrients and proved to be the most effective for filtration of pollutants<sup>2</sup>.
- Town staff completed a comprehensive report which contains a summary and analysis of the water quality monitoring data that has been collected since 1999. This report identified critical areas of concern; while fecal coli form inputs to Broad Creek have decreased over the years it continues to be a concern at monitoring stations on other tidal creeks, especially during the summer months. Nutrients and turbidity also continue to be a concern during the summer months at the majority of monitoring stations.
- Local studies<sup>3</sup> have shown the effects of watershed urbanization on tidal creek health. The studies showed that creeks with higher levels of impervious cover had measurable physical, chemical and biological impairments compared with undeveloped areas. High impervious surfaces correlated with high sediment contamination, coarser sediments and high fecal coli form levels.
- Based on national research that has been conducted 10-15% is the threshold impervious surface which can be sustained within a watershed. Once the impervious surface exceeds 15% pollution sensitive insects which serve as a primary food source for fish and shellfish populations experience rapid decline.<sup>2</sup> The Island's area above the high tide line is equal to 34.5 square miles, approximately 5 square miles of which is covered with impervious surfaces. The Island is broken down into 34 watersheds, of those watersheds 31 are over 10% and 23 are over 15% impervious surface.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 1998 Clean Water Action Plan estimated that about half the nation's 2,000-plus major watersheds experience degraded water quality—polluted runoff a primary cause. To address this problem, EPA has urged a watershed management approach,

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2 Vandiver, Lisa and A. Fredrick Holland. September, 2007. Vegetated Buffer Efficiency in Coastal Regions of Southeastern United States. Hollings Marine Laboratory, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association. Contribution of the Hollings Marine Laboratory. Contact: lisa.vandiver@noaa.gov

3 The Trust for Public Land. 1999. Building Green Infrastructure: Land Conservation as a Watershed Protection Strategy. Prepared for the US Environmental Protection Agency.

and proposed that 20% of its Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) be set aside to provide communities with more flexibility to protect water.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3.1: Ecosystem Health and the Relationship to Impervious Surface**

Location	Stream Condition Marker	% Impervious Area where marked change occurred	Reference
Delaware	Decline in species diversity	8-15%	Paul and Meyer, 2001
Georgia	Decline in species diversity	15%	Roy et al., 2003
North Carolina	Water quality (fecal coliform)	>10%	Mallin et al., 2000
South Carolina	Physical, chemical, and biological indicators	10-20%	Holland et al., 2004
Washington	Loss of aquatic system function	10%	Booth and Jackson, 1997
Wisconsin	Decline in species diversity	8-12%	Stepenuck et al., 2002 Wang et al., 2000

- Preservation of wetlands is an essential component of water quality. Intact wetland systems provide highly efficient stormwater filtration. Wetlands control and hold stormwater and in cooperation with a diverse range of plants help to intercept and capture primary pollutant loads, prior to discharge into creeks and streams. Other essential functions of wetlands include providing high quality habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife, allowing for groundwater recharge as well as mitigating the effects of peak flooding.<sup>5</sup>
- Poorly maintained irrigation systems can waste water and money. Persistent leaks and broken heads on old or malfunctioning systems can waste more than 12 gallons a minute.<sup>6</sup>
- Debris in waterways has been an issue of concern from both an ecological standpoint as well as an aesthetic one. Plastic bags are one of the primary problems in waterways. They clog storm drains, choke canals and creeks, and lower property values and degrade recreational areas. In 2007, residents in the San Francisco Bay Area collected over 25,000 bags from San Francisco Bay – this amount represents only a small fraction of the total plastic trash flowing into the Bay and ocean. It is estimated by the California Integrated Waste Management Board that Bay residents use approximately 3.8 billion plastic bags per year and discard over one hundred plastic bags per second. It is estimated that about one million of these bags wind up in the Bay each year where they pollute the water, smother wetlands and entangle and kill animals.
- South Carolina Sea Grant organizes Beach and River Sweep debris clean-up days every year. Between 2006 and 2008, encompassing the areas of Bluffton and Hilton Head Island, over 7,000lbs of debris was collected from our beaches and creeks. In addition, the Town also pays for beach litter patrol and cleanup along roadways.

4 The Trust for Public Land. 1999. Building Green Infrastructure: Land Conservation as a Watershed Protection Strategy. Prepared for the US Environmental Protection Agency.

5 Fretwell, Judy D., Daniel Smith, Richard P. Novitzki. October, 1997. National Water Summary on Wetland Resources: United States Geological Survey Water Supply Paper 2425

6 University of Florida Fact Sheet: Conserving Water, Solutions for Your Florida-Friendly Landscape <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/water/articles/systems/maintenance.shtml>

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The data collected on the local, regional and national scale suggests that the current development strategies can have a negative impact on water quality. The Town needs to continue to make water quality and quantity a high priority by encouraging water conservation, reducing impervious surfaces, encouraging environmentally sound drainage and flood control practices, as well as sustainably manage stormwater for small and large scale development.

### 3.2 Air Quality

#### Data:

- As a vacation destination for many, Hilton Head Island receives over 2 million people throughout the year. Due to the primary reliance on personal vehicles for transportation around the island it is important to note the long term impacts traffic congestion on and around Hilton Head Island can have on air quality.
- Ozone levels increase with heat. On hot summer days peak ozone concentration increases by 2 to 4% for each degree Celsius increase in air temperature. Urban heat islands are created in paved areas that have reduced tree canopy shading. By maintaining existing tree cover and continuing to require replacement trees for those removed, overall air temperatures and ground level ozone can be reduced. Trees also trap and filter particulate pollutants which can aggravate human health ailments such as asthma.<sup>7</sup>
- Changes in climate can affect air quality. Warming of the atmosphere increases the formation of ground-level ozone. The National Academy of Sciences recommends that air pollution and climate change policies be developed through an integrated approach. A number of strategies are discussed for climate change, such as: energy efficiency, renewable energy, and reducing the number of vehicles on the highway will provide reductions in emissions that contribute to multiple air quality concerns such as ozone and particle pollution, toxic air pollutants, atmospheric deposition, and visibility.<sup>8</sup>
- The trends in domestic greenhouse gas emissions over time in the U.S. show that the dominant gas emitted is carbon dioxide (mostly from fossil fuel combustion). The data shows that total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions increased 15% between 1990 and 2006.<sup>8</sup>
- Several regional cross-sectional studies in the United States and Europe have shown consistently higher rates of bronchitis and bronchitic symptoms among children with higher exposure to total suspended particulates than in children living in less polluted areas. Recently published reviews on the health effects of air pollution reported chronic adverse health effects even at relatively low levels of ambient particulates in urban areas.<sup>9</sup>
- Motor vehicles contribute up to 70% of ozone-forming emissions in urban areas. Exhaust from automobiles also contributes to haze, particulates and other air and water pollution problems.<sup>10</sup>
- Using data collected on the ground and from satellite imaging of 240 sites over 35 million acres, scientists found that the more untouched a forest, the greater its carbon storage capacity in the total

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7 Sailor, David, Ph.D. May 10, 2007. The Urban Heat Island – Causes, Impacts and Mitigation Strategies. Mechanical and Materials Engineering, Portland State University.

8 National Academy of Sciences. Understanding and Responding to Climate Change: Highlights of National Academies Reports, 2008 Edition. [http://dels.nas.edu/dels/rpt\\_briefs/climate\\_change\\_2008\\_final.pdf](http://dels.nas.edu/dels/rpt_briefs/climate_change_2008_final.pdf)

9 Frye, Christian, Bernd Hoelscher, Josef Cyrys, Matthias Wjst, H.-Erich Wichmann, and Joachim Heinrich. March 2003. Association of Lung Function with Declining Ambient Air Pollution. Environmental Health Perspectives, Vol. 111, No 3.

10 US EPA, Office of Air and Radiation, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards. National Air Quality Status and Trends (through 2007).



biomass of the trees and soil. It found that the oldest areas of forest can store more than 809 tons of carbon per acre.<sup>7</sup>

- Vehicles emit about one-third of all volatile organic compounds and half of the nitrogen oxides and air toxics that contribute to poor air quality. These contaminants contribute ozone forming pollutants, aggravating asthma and other respiratory ailments.<sup>10</sup>
- In 2002 the United States Environmental Protection Agency estimated our national truck fleet at 500,000. A comprehensive study found that the truck fleet emits approximately 10.9 million tons of carbon dioxide and 190,476 tons of nitrous oxide as well as consuming 960 million gallons of diesel fuel while idling.<sup>11</sup>
- As of March 2008, 35 cities, counties and/or states have adopted anti-idling ordinances, which greatly restrict the time vehicles can remain stationary with the engine on. Locations with ordinances enacted include the City of Atlanta, City and County of Denver, City of New York, as well as the states of California, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, as well as many others.<sup>12</sup>
- The 2008 daily average for traffic coming over the bridges onto the island was approximately 47,900 vehicles. The numbers have increased from ten years ago when the daily average was 42,300. The increasing volume of daily traffic brings with it unintended but significant impacts to air quality, water quality and wildlife.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Toxic and cancer-causing chemicals can be inhaled directly or carried by small particles into the lungs. Millions of pounds of these chemicals are emitted into the air over our nation every year by motor vehicles and by both large and small industry. The Town needs to consider the human health and environmental implications of declining air quality and act to prevent further degradation through alternative and innovative transportation strategies, providing incentives for energy efficiency, research the feasibility of enacting an anti-idling ordinance and maintaining effective tree protection and replanting regulations.

## 3.3 Positive Impacts of Environmental Preservation on Quality of Life

### Current Policies:

- Town staff has in the past and continues to work with multiple non-profit, municipal, county and state agencies on accomplishing regional goals to maintain and improve quality of life throughout the Lowcountry. Some of the recent projects include the Together for Beaufort Water Quality Task Force and the Natural Assets Element of the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan.
- The acquisition of property and subsequent creation of parks by the Town of Hilton Head Island has opened vistas as well as increased open space opportunities for the public. Additional opportunities may develop as new land acquisition is completed.
- To prevent the eventual disappearance of the dry sand beach, the Town renourishes the beach periodically. The most recent beach renourishment was completed in 2007. The Town also conducts semi-annual surveys of beach conditions.
- The Town adopted a Beach Management Plan in 1991 which inventoried and evaluated existing conditions along the beach, and identified needed improvements to facilities and regulations. An update to this plan was completed in 2008, which serves as an appendix to this document.

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11 US EPA, Office of Air and Radiation: Study of Exhaust Emissions from Idling Heavy-Duty Diesel Trucks and Commercially Available Idle-Reducing Devices. EPA420-R-02-025, October 2002.

12 American Transportation Research Institute, Compendium of Idling Regulations, March 2008.

- The Town has been proactive in the creation of additional dune systems on the beach front. The sand fencing installation and native plantings completed after the 1997 renourishment have been very successful in creating new dune systems. Additional planting and fencing was installed on the beach during the spring of 2008 as part of the 2007 beach renourishment.
- In order to help prevent development from encroaching on the natural dune systems along the beachfront a Critical Storm Protection and Dune Accretion Area and Transition Area was established for South Forest Beach and adopted by Town Council in 2006. In 2008, the process was initiated to extend the shoreline protection area for the entire beach, from Lands End in Sea Pines Plantation to Fish Haul Creek. In September 2009 the extension was adopted by Town Council.

### **Data:**

- Major findings of the Hilton Head Island Community Survey reported that 98% of residents promote protecting the natural environment during the redevelopment process and 93% support maintaining the Island's unique character, which is directly related to the preservation of intact natural resources such as beaches, creeks, wetlands and forests.
- Bulkheads adjacent to the salt marsh protect private property, but restrict the growth of productive cordgrass that provide wildlife and water quality benefits. The construction of new bulkheads has been a growing trend on Hilton Head Island. The required backfilling behind newly constructed walls often results in the loss of fringe wetland. The change from a soft shoreline to a hardened structure permanently alters the nearshore habitat for wildlife as well as the long term dynamics of the barrier island environment.
- The use of non-native plants on homesites and in resort areas has resulted in the higher use of fertilizer, irrigation, and pesticides. Exotic plants attract non-native animal species including insect pests. Native plants are lower maintenance, very often more drought and salt tolerant.
- Snags (dead trees), fallen logs, high grass, and shrub rows are prime wildlife habitat. These are routinely eliminated in the normal course of land clearing and landscaping for a more manicured look. It is critical to maintain a diversity of habitats throughout the island to in turn sustain species diversity.
- The preservation of healthy water resources maintains and improves the quality of life for island residents and visitors. Wetlands, beaches and creeks, free of garbage, chemicals, sediments and unsanitary stormwater runoff, are essential for maintaining a good quality of life. This includes reducing prevalence of environmentally related diseases, as well as maintaining a high standard for all recreational activities.<sup>13</sup>
- National research shows that preservation of healthy and properly maintained tree stands is not only good for the local economy but also an important factor in maintaining quality of life.<sup>14</sup> Some of the highlights include:
  - 83% of realtors believe that mature trees have a "strong or moderate impact" on the salability of homes listed for under \$150,000; on homes over \$250,000, this perception increases to 98% (Arbor National Mortgage & American Forests).
  - Landscaping, especially with trees, can increase property values as much as 20% (Management Information Services/ICMA).
  - Healthy, mature trees add an average of 10% to a property's value (USDA Forest Service).
  - In laboratory research, visual exposure to settings with trees has produced significant recovery from stress within five minutes, as indicated by changes in blood pressure and muscle tension (Dr. Roger S. Ulrich, Texas A&M University).

13 Ulrich, R.S. 1984. View through a window may influence recovery from surgery. *Science* 224: 420-421.

14 USDA Forest Service. 1993. A Technical Guide to Urban Community Forestry: Urban and Community Forestry: Improving Our Quality of Life. [www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/10970](http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/10970)



- Trees help moderate the "urban heat island" effect. They also greatly increase human comfort indoors or outdoors. On hot days, trees pump hundreds of gallons of water through their foliage. This water evaporates, keeping the tree and its immediate surroundings cool. While groves of trees reduce local air temperatures, individual trees increase human comfort primarily by controlling solar radiation (radiation is the movement of heat from a warmer body, the Sun, to a cooler body, the Earth). Trees and other vegetation shield people from direct sunlight. Trees also shade soil, pavement, buildings, and other surfaces that would absorb solar energy and then radiate that heat back to the surroundings. Without the protection of trees, city dwellers are literally surrounded by radiant heat.<sup>14, 15</sup>

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The preservation of natural resources includes thoughtful planning techniques and sustainable land-use practices. The Town needs to maintain healthy beaches and creeks, invest in well-planned green space and protect mature tree canopies in order to enhance and support mental and physical health, economic vitality and a high quality of life.

## 3.4 Environmental Education

### Data:

- Ecotourism is a growing industry on the Island, and it provides an excellent source of public access, education, and recreation. Ecotours are often water based, with patrons using kayaks under the guidance of experienced personnel. Such programs are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, and can lead to a greater understanding of and appreciation for the environment. While not currently a problem, duplication of tours by a number of companies could lead to overuse of an area which can degrade the very resources which the tours are seeking to interpret.
- Environmental education is defined as the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness of humans, their culture and their biophysical surroundings. One of the major roles of environmental education is to educate people to think more on the interaction between human society and the environment, and its long-term consequences.<sup>16</sup>
- A prerequisite for the long-term sustainability of parks and protected areas is public involvement and support for the conservation of natural resources. In order to better educate the public, local environmental education opportunities must be available.<sup>17</sup>
- Environmental education enables residents to make the necessary decisions to ensure adequate resources for both ours and future generations. In turn, environmental education is vital to the concept of sustainable development. The National Environmental and Training Foundation estimates that environmental education about topics such as energy, water and waste management, employee health, cleaner working conditions, and recycling would save small and medium sized businesses alone at least \$25 billion per year.<sup>18, 19</sup>
- The enhancement and maintenance of high quality wildlife habitat is an immediate and direct effect of strong environmental education. Helping visitors and residents understand the impact they have upon the surrounding natural resources encourages the creation of better environmental stewards.

15 National Arbor Day Foundation: [www.arborday.org/trees/benefits.cfm](http://www.arborday.org/trees/benefits.cfm)

16 Dooms, L. 1995. Environmental Education (Belgium: Vrije Universiteit Brussels Press).

17 Sauv  , Lucie. 1996 Environmental Education and Sustainable Development: A Further Appraisal. Canadian Journal of Environmental Education (CJEE), Vol 1, No 1.

18 Fujii, Tomoki. September 2, 2003. Measurement of the benefits of environmental education. Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California at Berkeley.

19 National Environmental Education Advisory Council, Report to Congress, September 2000

- The National Science Foundation's Advisory Committee for Environmental Research and Education stated in a 2003 report that "in the coming decades, the public will more frequently be called upon to understand complex environmental issues, assess risk, evaluate proposed environmental plans and understand how individual decisions affect the environment at local and global scales. Creating a scientifically informed citizenry requires a concerted, systematic approach to environmental education".<sup>20</sup>

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Our community and our nation's future rely on a well-educated public to be wise stewards of the very environment that sustains us. It is environmental education which can best help us as individuals make the complex, conceptual connections between economic prosperity, benefits to society, environmental health, and our own well being. Ultimately, the collective wisdom of our citizens, gained through education, will be the most compelling and most successful strategy for environmental management. Therefore, the Town should take a leadership position to provide enhanced environmental learning opportunities for community development.

## 3.5 Sustainable Development

### Data:

- Sustainability: Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.<sup>21</sup>
- Large scale roads with wide rights-of-way and high speed traffic are barriers to wildlife movement and create habitat fragmentation, affecting large predators most. Small to moderate scale development fragments drainage and vegetation corridors used for food, shelter, and pathways for wildlife. More sustainable development patterns for the island should be considered during the redevelopment process.
- Findings of the Hilton Head Island Community Survey reported that 84% of residents surveyed supported the notion that environmentally responsible architecture and sustainable development should be a focus of redevelopment.
- The economic stability of Hilton Head Island is greatly dependent upon tourism revenues. The presence of abundant wildlife is a major component of the aesthetic appeal of the island. Maintaining intact wildlife habitat in the form of wetlands, creeks, wildlife corridors, vegetated buffers, mature dune systems and dense forests is critical to the long term sustainability of the island's wildlife population and in turn the economy.
- Commercial insurance payouts in the wake of Katrina were estimated at about \$20 billion. Only recently have some insurance companies begun to address the financial repercussions of global warming. For example, one company is introducing commercial insurance policies encouraging the development of "green" buildings that save energy and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions.
- Arlington County, VA reported energy savings of \$100,000 at its government buildings and a 2% drop in energy intensity in the same county buildings from 2007 to 2008. The 89,973 square-foot Court Square West building cut the amount of energy consumed at the site from 2007 to 2008, with a comprehensive lighting retrofit last year reducing electricity use about 10% at the building. The 30,000 square-foot new Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified Parks Operations building cut energy use about 20% last year compared to 2007.

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20 Complex Environmental Systems: Synthesis for Earth, Life, and Society in the 21st Century, NSF Advisory Committee for Environmental Research and Education (2003) Page 41

21 Brundtland Commission Report, 1987

- Across America, examples are emerging where communities are utilizing tools like low impact development, greenway buffers, the creation of park and recreational areas, natural and constructed wetlands, urban and community forestry, waterfront brownfields revitalization, low impact development, watershed-based management, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, and other tools to reduce non-point source pollution, control stormwater, and improve water quality. These tools for clean water approaches are often more cost-effective than traditional structural solutions like building new wastewater plants or stormwater collection facilities. Moreover, these tools not only enable localities to achieve clean water goals, but they also help maintain other community objectives, such as preservation of open space and parks, cleanup of environmental contamination and community eyesores, creation of sustainable economic development, saving tax dollars through efficient use of infrastructure, and the improvement of overall quality of life.
- The SC Code of Laws (48-39-250(6)) states that "...it is in both the public and private interests to afford the beach/dune system space to accrete and erode in its natural cycle by discouraging new construction in close proximity to the beach/dune system and encouraging those who have erected structures too close to the system in the past to retreat from it." This would suggest that the Town should consider removing the grandfather clause from the Critical Storm Protection and Dune Accretion and Transition Area Overlay District.
- Already nearly two-thirds of the global population crowd along a coastline, or live within 100 miles of one. If trends continue, 75% will reside in coastal areas by 2025. Most coastal ecosystems have been negatively affected by sprawled development and in turn the excessive pollution produced by that development. The negative impact of coastal development may be compounded by the effects of the sea temperatures rising, which can result in increased beach erosion and more intense, frequent storm activity. In order to meet these challenges, future planning for coastal areas needs to be comprehensive and watershed based. It is vital to strike a balance between the different uses of our coasts in the pursuit of long term sustainability through the utilization of low impact development strategies.<sup>22, 23</sup>
- Business leaders increasingly believe that an environmentally literate workforce is critical to their long term success and profitability, with better environmental practices and improved efficiencies positively impacting the bottom line, while helping to better position and prepare their companies for the future.<sup>24</sup>
- In New York City a tax measure was recently proposed that would charge six cents for each plastic bag used in stores across New York City. If passed, the tax proposal would bring in an estimated \$16 million, making New York City one of the first cities in the United States to implement such a charge on plastic bags. Seattle Washington has proposed charging twenty cents for each plastic bag used. Similar proposals have succeeded elsewhere. In 2002, a 33 cent fee imposed per plastic bag in Ireland led to a 94% decrease in plastic bag usage. In March 2007, San Francisco became the first U.S. city to ban non-biodegradable plastic bags in favor of recyclable and reusable bags. Large department stores in Britain report that charging customers for bags resulted in a 95% decrease in plastic bag use. Fees on single-use bags are proven to reduce litter and plastic bag use and motivate shoppers to switch.
- The United States Green Building Council in cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Institute worked to produce multiple projects including a government building, a regional high school and a housing development, which all maximized resource efficiency and water conservation for the same cost as conventional design. Quality of life, marketability and sustainability have all been enhanced as a result.<sup>25, 26</sup>

22 Hinrichsen, Don, 1995. Coasts in Crisis. American Association for the Advancement of Science. <http://www.aaas.org/>

23 National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals Trust for Public Land. 2003. SMART GROWTH FOR CLEAN WATER: Helping Communities Address the Water Quality Impacts of Sprawl.

24 Campaign for Environmental Literacy 2007. <http://www.fundee.org/campaigns/nclb/brief2b.htm>

25 Rocky Mountain Institute, Case Studies, 2009. <http://bet.rmi.org/our-work/case-studies>

26 United States Green Building Council, 2008. <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=76>

- It has become very common for consumers to use their purchasing power to become better environmental stewards. Due to this high demand for purchasing information many websites have been created to provide background environmental information for individual companies. The Town can utilize the same resources in order to raise its level of environmental responsibility. Websites such as [www.betterworldshopper.com](http://www.betterworldshopper.com) help consumers make better decisions. The Town should consider using some of this information when making large purchases, and choosing vendors for routine services such as fuel supply.

**Table 3.1: Summary of Cost Savings between Conventional and LID Approaches**

Project	Conventional	LID	Cost Difference	Percent Difference
2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave SEA St	\$868,803	\$651,548	\$217,255	25%
Auburn Hills	\$2,360,385	\$1,598,989	\$761,396	32%
Bellingham City Hall	\$27,600	\$5,600	\$22,000	80%
Bellingham Boedel Donovan Park	\$52,800	\$12,800	\$40,000	76%
Gap Creek	\$4,620,600	\$3,942,100	\$678,500	15%
Garden Valley	\$324,400	\$260,700	\$63,700	20%
Laurel Springs	\$1,654,021	\$1,149,552	\$504,469	30%
Mill Creek	\$12,510	\$9,099	\$3,411	27%
Prairie Glen	\$1,004,848	\$599,536	\$405,312	40%
Somerset	\$2,456,843	\$1,671,461	\$785,382	32%
Tellabs Corporate Campus	\$3,162,160	\$2,700,650	\$461,510	15%

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Coastal municipalities are under increasing pressure to accommodate human-induced changes to the natural environment. In order to sustain long-term well being, the Town needs to employ and encourage others to utilize resource efficiency and low impact development practices on every site.

## 3.6 Goals and Implementation Strategies

### Goals

#### 3.1 Protect Water Quality and Quantity

- The goal is management of impaired watersheds.
- The goal is to preserve all blueways (which includes salt marsh, freshwater wetlands, open canals, ditches and open water systems).
- The goal is to encourage water conservation.
- The goal is to encourage private property owners to incorporate water quality protection measures into their home and/or development.
- The goal is to research the possibility of instituting an irrigation inspection program to assist in water conservation and design efficiency.

#### 3.2 Improve Air Quality

- The goal is to explore opportunities for alternative transportation to limit traffic congestion and pollution, including potential for effective mass transit and other innovative transportation strategies.
- The goal is to preserve and plant trees for reduction of urban heat island effect.
- The goal is to educate residents and visitors about the impacts of idling and traffic congestion and provide ways in which each person can help to reduce idling time as well as reduce overall personal and commercial vehicle usage. The Island imports nearly 100 percent of goods. The commercial fleet utilized to transport these goods should be encouraged to reduce idling time due to its potential impact on air quality.

### 3.3 Protect Quality of Life through Environmental Preservation

- A. The goal is to monitor the effectiveness of the Critical Storm Protection and Dune Accretion Area and Transition Area overlay district.
- B. The goal is to maintain human health through natural resource preservation.
- C. The goal is to maintain beach ecosystem for wildlife (e.g. Sea turtle nesting, island glass lizard habitat, piping plover Critical Habitat).
- D. The goal is to preserve open space (including improvement and enhancement of existing).
- E. The goal is to encourage greenways between present and future town properties.
- F. The goal is to encourage the preservation and/or enhancement of wildlife habitat on all town properties.
- G. The goal is to encourage blueways between present and future town properties.
- H. The goal is to enhance, create and maintain vegetated riparian wetland buffers with viewing corridors and windows.
- I. The goal is to incorporate wildlife design standards for all roads (new and upgrades to existing).

### 3.4 Maintain Environmental Education and Outreach with the Public

- A. The goal is to initiate and maintain partnerships with other Island, county, state and federal agencies for environmental education purposes (e.g. Coastal Discovery Museum, Friends of the Rivers, Chamber of Commerce, Clemson University, OCRM, SCDNR, NOAA).
- B. The goal is to continue to communicate with Island residents and visitors for general environmental education relating to stormwater, native plants, buffers, wildlife, water quality.
- C. The goal is to continue to create and disseminate brochures and other informational material for visitors and citizens.
- D. The goal is to encourage property owners to become 'wildlife friendly' through environmental education.

### 3.5 Promote Sustainable Development

- A. The goal is to create incentives for low impact development (both site and structure design).
- B. The goal is to create a "green" standard for all capital improvement projects.
- C. The goal is to establish a "green" maintenance standard for Town properties.
- D. The goal is to create positive environmental effects on the surrounding neighborhood through Town open space land acquisition program.
- E. The goal is to preserve wetlands (isolated freshwater are of high priority), trees, rare or critical animal habitats, rare or critical plant species, and reduce impervious surfaces in impaired watersheds through land acquisition.
- F. The goal is to reduce and mitigate the negative impacts of sea level rise and global warming effects on Island.
- G. The goal is to explore the opportunity to implement a plastic bag fee for shopping establishments.

## Implementation Strategies

### 3.1 Protect Water Quality and Quantity

- A. Explore incentives to motivate applicants to utilize watershed friendly, low-impact planning strategies during both the development and re-development review process.
- B. Maintain and/or improve watershed condition by reducing impervious surfaces through land acquisition.
- C. Explore the opportunities for trading development rights within impaired watersheds to take development pressure off environmentally sensitive headwater regions, areas of particular concern are watersheds 6, 8, 11, 19, 20, and 22 (see Impervious Surface Analysis Map for more details).
- D. Maintain and/or improve watershed pervious surface for Town projects.
- E. Require wetland buffers vegetated with native plants for all land-use types.
- F. Encourage the use of drought tolerant native plantings with high wildlife value (food and cover).
- G. Train qualified staff to conduct field inspections of installed irrigation systems to ensure water resource conservation and design efficiency. Inspections conducted by qualified Town staff would assist in saving money for the owner as well as water resources for the entire Island.

- H. Monitor water quality at stormwater discharge points and use the data to guide future infrastructure improvements.
- I. Use the latest technology to monitor environmental conditions and the effectiveness of current regulation.
- J. Implement the recommendations of the Broad Creek Management Plan.
- K. Avoid channelizing naturalized waterways solely for drainage purposes.
- L. Encourage homeowners to utilize alternative stormwater management techniques, through incentives provided by the Town of Hilton Head Island and the Stormwater Utility.
- M. Highlight resources for alternative stormwater management and designs for both single family and non-single family developments on the Town's website.

### 3.2 Improve Air Quality

- A. Promote innovative technologies for alternative transportation. Educate visitors and residents of the impacts that idling and traffic congestion have on air quality.
- B. Encourage bicycle friendly roadways through signage.
- C. Encourage walking districts to reduce daily trips.
- D. Explore opportunities for Park-n-Ride lots on mainland for commuters.
- E. Look at opportunities for staggered work hours.
- F. Continue the conversion of the municipal vehicle fleet to more efficient technology whenever practical.
- G. Continue to encourage the conservation of mature forests.
- H. Require island and median width in parking lots construction to accommodate large shade trees (min. 15 feet). Flexibility for other site features may be considered to accommodate this provision.
- I. Encourage private developments to create alternative forms of transportation to essential destinations.
- J. Encourage, through incentives, the use of resource efficiency in new and redevelopment projects.
- K. Preserve vertical layers of vegetation (canopy, understory, shrub, herbaceous) wherever possible and restore these layers in disturbed areas.
- L. Initiate an assessment of the Town's Urban Tree Cover.

### 3.3 Protect Quality of Life through Environmental Preservation

- A. Reduce or remove obstructions for corridors between blueways – especially between freshwater wetlands, salt marshes and beaches.
- B. Investigate incentives to encourage all property owners to replant native trees for those removed and keep 3 of their 4 buffers undisturbed in accordance with Design Review Guide.
- C. Assist utility companies to maintain easements in a natural state.
- D. Recommend methods to enhance wildlife habitat on Town projects such as parks, natural areas and rights-of-way. Some examples could include nesting boxes, nesting platforms, littoral shelves in ponds, wildflower patches, living hedges and thickets, enhanced buffers.
- E. Utilize wildlife friendly infrastructure for roads, including but not limited to: culverts for under-road crossings; no curbing or rolled curbing; lower speed limits and/or traffic-calming devices (e.g. curved roads, trees on shoulders, landscaped medians); wooded medians on roadways 4 lanes or greater (act as wildlife crossing refuges); signage to alert motorists of crossing areas.

### 3.4 Maintain Environmental Education and Outreach with the Public

- A. Assist in funding the Clemson Extension Agent.
- B. Host workshops and seminars in Beaufort County for the general public's information on environmental issues and regulations.
- C. Show how to reduce nutrient inputs, sediment, pathogens, organic matter and litter before it reaches drainage conveyance systems using demonstration projects and public education.
- D. Implement interpretive signs at Island parks; include researching grant opportunities for financial support.
- E. Develop an education program to inform property owners of the benefits (to their health, property values and wildlife) of preserving or enhancing native vegetation.



- F. Inform the public about programs for certifying backyard wildlife habitat that help make properties wildlife friendly such as:
- G. National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, National Audubon Golf Course Certification, and Carolina Yards and Neighborhoods.

### 3.5 Promote Sustainable Development

- A. Develop a comprehensive sustainability plan that addresses green practices throughout its operations to position the Town as a nationally recognized leader in the green movement. This sustainability plan would address the design and construction of new facilities and parks as well as retrofits of existing facilities; assist in the formulation of enhanced regulations for the private sector to follow for new and existing development. It would also include the implementation of an effective Town wide recycling program and a comprehensive education program.
- B. Integrate a LID menu of optional design techniques into the Land Management Ordinance. Each LID design technique should be incentivized to encourage use by the applicant/developer.
- C. Explore the opportunities for monetary and non-monetary incentives for LID.
- D. Green-up Capital Improvement projects to include achieving green certifications with programs such as Sustainable Sites Initiative, LEED or Earthcraft for new and redeveloped Town facilities and infrastructure. It could also include the use of recycled building materials and recycled asphalt for roadways. Other greening initiatives could utilize reflective paint for dark surfaces to reduce urban heat islands, the use of solar panel technology, employment of green roofs, pervious parking, wildlife-friendly crossings during roadway construction, preservation of existing tree canopy, green roofs and rainwater harvest technologies for the capture and reuse of stormwater.
- E. Establish criteria to include during the solicitation process for potential contractors based on level of environmental responsibility. Criteria can be established to evaluate a contractor based on environmental stewardship.
- F. Develop green maintenance strategies, including the use of organic fertilizers and cleaning products, low-VOC paint and carpet.
- G. Increasing building efficiency by utilizing compact fluorescent bulbs for light fixtures, enhancing the weatherproofing for both doors and windows. This may include the need to conduct an energy audit for Town facilities in order to properly assess energy usage and target ways in which the Town could improve efficiency. These projects can then function to provide practical examples for the public to follow and integrate into future developments.
- H. Support beach renourishment activities.
- I. Institute an effective, Island-wide recycling program.
- J. Increase the frequency of the hazardous waste round-ups.
- K. Identify smaller pieces of land for acquisition in order to provide localized benefits such as reduction of stormwater runoff, increased shading of impervious surfaces and overall reduction of impervious surfaces.
- L. Utilize the latest technology to better understand the long term implications of sea level rise and global warming on island natural resources.
- M. Consider eliminating the grandfather clause for non-conformities in the Critical Storm Protection Dune Accretion Area and Transition Area overlay district. This is in order to protect private property from storm surge and sea level rise as well as maintain a mature intact dune system.
- N. The implementation of a small fee for the use of plastic bags would reduce the overall demand, reduce litter, as well as provide a small amount of money to the Town for reinvestment. Low cost reusable bags could be provided by the Town.

## 4 Population

*To maintain a diverse population in the Town of Hilton Head Island which is given the opportunity to be well educated, financially secure, and enjoy a high quality of life.*

### Introduction

An accurate description of the population of the Town of Hilton Head Island raises some complicated issues. Hilton Head Island is not a typical Southeastern town and its population is quite different from those of other towns in the South, and indeed much of the United States. The Town's geographic nature, tourism based economy and number of seasonal or interval occupancy housing units are the primary reasons for this difference. As an island, the reasons for which people have chosen to move to or remain in the Town are specific to the place: quality of life, natural resources and ocean frontage, unique recreational facilities and its prominence as a retirement community. Hilton Head Island is nationally and internationally recognized as a high quality place to visit, live and retire.

Hilton Head Island is home to an estimated 40,000 people on a permanent, full-time basis. The population continues to grow as the Town matures. Maintaining a high quality of life in the face of rapid growth has been one of the primary challenges faced by the Town. As the population continues to grow and diversify, properly managing development and redevelopment will continue to be a significant challenge.

The community is comprised of families, children and older adults of many races and backgrounds. The Island's residents have chosen to live here for many reasons. Some have come here to enjoy the benefits of retirement while others located here to make a living. There are, within the spectrum of the population, different levels of social and economic capacity. An understanding of these elements is the goal of this analysis of the population of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

An inventory and analysis of demographic data for the Town of Hilton Head Island involves several issues: a clear explanation of the most current data available; comparisons of trends indicated in the data; comparisons with Beaufort County, South Carolina, and surrounding communities; and projections of likely future population rates and characteristics. From this type of analysis, it is possible to understand the trends and patterns that have affected Hilton Head Island in the past, the way in which the Town relates to its larger demographic environment, and what the Town may be like in the future.

A clear understanding of political and statistical geography is useful in order to analyze the Town of Hilton Head Island's population. Unlike many municipalities, Hilton Head Island has clearly marked geographic boundaries. Within that area are U.S. Census defined areas called census tracts and block groups. On a broader scale, the census recognizes Beaufort County and the State of South Carolina. Additionally, within Beaufort County there are divisions of "Planning Areas" used by the Low Country Council of Governments for county analysis.

The Town of Hilton Head Island has an unusual asset in the availability of reliable demographic data beyond the normal decennial census tabulations. As special census tabulations have been taken for the years 1975, 1985 and 1995, it is possible to trace the trends of population change over five year intervals. There are limits to the data available from these tabulations, and it remains necessary to focus on the most complete decennial census (taken in 2000) for some variables. A additional review and analysis of this chapter will take place upon release of the upcoming 2010 U.S. Census data, anticipated in the spring of 2011.



**Table 4.1: Population Trends, 1960 - 2000**

Year	Hilton Head Island	% Change	Beaufort County	% Change	South Carolina	% Change
1960	NA	--	41,052	--	2,382,594	--
1970	NA	--	51,136	24.6	2,590,516	8.7
1975	6,511	--	58,000*	13.4	2,816,000*	8.7
1980	11,344	74.2	65,364	12.7	3,121,820	10.9
1985	17,622	55.3	80,400*	23.0	3,333,000*	6.8
1990	23,694	34.5	86,425	7.5	3,485,703	4.6
1995	28,800	21.5	102,735*	18.9	3,698,746*	6.1
2000	33,862	17.5	120,937	17.7	4,012,012	8.5

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau: 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census of Population and Housing.

U.S. Census Bureau: special census tabulations for Hilton Head Island for 1975, 1985, 1995.

Notes: \* = US Census Bureau data for inter-census populations and percentages based on estimates.

## 4.1 Population

The total permanent resident population of the Town of Hilton Head Island according to the 2000 Census is 33,862 persons. When compared with the 2000 population of Beaufort County, the Town comprises nearly 28% of the County's population. In 1975, Hilton Head Island's share of the County population was approximately 11%. While the Town's percentage of the County population has diminished slightly since 1995, the fact that in 25 years Hilton Head Island gained a nearly 17% share of the population of a growing county such as Beaufort County speaks to the Town's dramatic emergence over a short time period as shown in Table 4.1, Population Trends 1960-2000.

Table 4.2, Planning Area Population Trends, shows how distribution of the population in Beaufort County has changed over the past four decades. In 1980, the population of Hilton Head Island comprised 17% of the county, and by 2000 it comprised 28%. The Beaufort/Port Royal area had 59% of the county's population in 1980 and only 37% in 2000. Bluffton's share of the population has grown from 6% to 16% during this period, mainly due to annexations of large vacant parcels that have been built as residential developments which surrounded the previous one square mile Town.

**Table 4.2: Planning Area Population Trends**

Year	Hilton Head Island	Beaufort/Port Royal Island	Sheldon Township	St. Helena	Bluffton Township	Lady's Island
1960	NA	31,711	3,293	6,047	3,135	NA
1970	NA	37,636	2,530	5,718	2,757	NA
1980	11,344	39,017	2,994	5,091	3,652	3,094
1990	23,694	40,710	3,194	6,579	7,084	5,046
2000	33,862	44,563	4,116	9,486	19,044	9,321

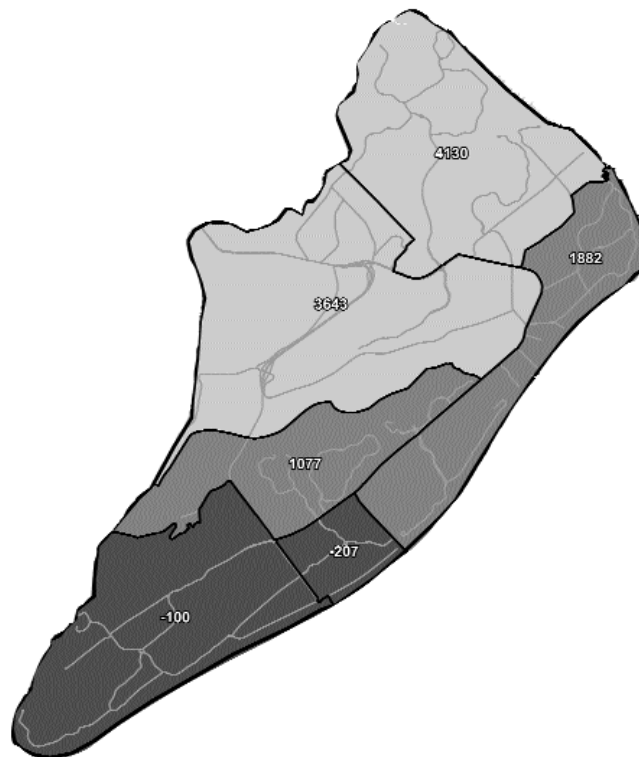
Source: Beaufort County Planning Department (data from U.S. Census Bureau)

### Recent Population Change

The U.S. Census Bureau performs population counts based on geographic units called census blocks, block groups, and tracts. A block group is made up of, as the name suggests, a group of blocks, and a tract is comprised of several block groups. Typically, census tracts are used to make comparisons of population from one census to the next. For Hilton Head Island, however, the census tract boundaries were modified and renumbered for the 2000 Census, making a direct comparison impossible.

However, it was possible to combine block groups from the 1990 and 2000 censuses to create six areas for comparison. While there were slight variations in the boundaries of these six areas, they were determined to be insignificant for the purposes of this analysis. Figure 4.1, Population Change on Hilton Head Island, 1990 to 2000, shows these six areas along with the population change between 1990 and 2000. Two areas on the south end of the Island had a slight decrease in population, while two areas on the north end of the Island had significant increases in population (over 3,500 persons). For this comparison the northern section is comprised of Hilton Head Plantation, Indigo Run and all other areas of the Town north of Broad Creek and Union Cemetery Road. The southern portion includes Sea Pines and Shipyard Plantations.

**Figure 4.1: Population Change on Hilton Head Island, 1990 to 2000**



Source: US Census Bureau. 2000

A possible explanation for these differences in growth between the southern and northern portions of the Island is that there is more tourism related development on the south end and more permanent residential development on the north end of the Island. In addition, the south end was nearly built out by 1990, as it was the location of the early developments on the Island, while the north end was still developing during this decade. In 1990 the northern section of the Island comprised approximately 39.7% of the total population. By 2000 the population percentages had significantly changed with 50.1% of the total population living in the northern section of the Town and 49.9% living in the southern portion. This trend is expected to continue as the northern portion of the Town sees the majority of new residential construction.

### Seasonal Population Characteristics

Data for the permanent population of Hilton Head Island does not tell the complete story of the numbers of people that occupy the Island during different times of the year. As a community with a large resort and retirement component, there is a considerably higher actual number of persons on the Island than what was reported by the census tabulations. This population also has fluctuations according to season, making the actual number of persons not only greater than the permanent population by some degree, but also varies throughout the year. Finally, the Island labor force has the effect of increasing the daytime population of the Island as a large percentage of workers commute from off-Island locations. The sum of these factors makes the actual population of the Town of Hilton Head Island very difficult to estimate at any one point in time. The most important aspect of seasonal population on Hilton Head Island concerns the seasonal trends of visitation to the Island. Data from the South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism Bureau have been published in “Lodging Trends in South Carolina” and are used by the Hilton Head Island Chamber of Commerce to describe the business cycle pattern by season, as shown in Table 4.3, Seasonal Visitor Population Trends for Hilton Head Island.

The most significant finding is that visitation in 1995 was more evenly distributed among the seasons than was the case twenty years ago. Whereas in 1976 a majority of visitors came to the Island during the summer months of June through August, in 1995 summer visitation was only slightly higher than that for the spring. The majority of the shift took place between 1976 and 1987, with only minor fluctuations since 1987. This leveling of the seasonal impact on the Island is viewed as a positive economic factor.

**Table 4.3: Seasonal Visitor Population Trends for Hilton Head Island**

Season	Percent of Annual Visitors by Season by Year				
	1976	1987	1991	1995	2000
Spring	19.7%	28.0%	28.9%	29.8%	29.0%
Summer	51.1%	33.3%	31.5%	31.0%	31.0%
Fall	21.8%	24.0%	24.2%	23.25	23.0%
Winter	7.4%	15.0%	15.4%	16.0%	17.0%

Sources: 1976, 1987, 1991, 1995 from Lodging Trends in South Carolina, S.C. Parks, Recreation and Tourism, 2000 from Estimated Monthly Visitors, Hilton Head Chamber of Commerce

### Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Permanent and seasonal population has experienced significant growth.
- As an Island with a large commuter work force and large visitor draw, the Town of Hilton Head Island should have accurate counts of seasonal and daytime Island populations. The data is necessary for many reasons, in particular, to assist in planning for evacuations, traffic and transportation infrastructure improvements and the provision of other public services (More information is in the Transportation and Community Facilities Elements).
- Establishing a method for tracking the Island's actual daytime and seasonal population including the impacts of the commuting workforce and seasonal visitor population is important.
- With the growing size and diversity of the Town's population, new and unforeseen challenges are likely to arise. To better understand and address these challenges the Town needs access to a large base of comprehensive demographic information
- The sense of community on Hilton Head Island needs to be reenergized and all elements of its population made more aware of each other. The Town needs to foster a Town identity and continue to play an active role in merging Hilton Head Island's many communities into one Island community.

## 4.2 Population Projections

### Estimates

Population projections generally concern two issues: an estimate of the current population and statistical projections of future populations. The Town's population, for the years 1995 through 2008, is illustrated in Table 4.4, Population Estimates for Hilton Head Island. Census estimates show the Town of Hilton Head Island's population remaining relatively constant from 2000 through 2008. It appears that the estimates for years 1995 through 1999 were somewhat conservative as is indicated by the significant spike (8.6%) based on official Census population numbers in 2000. In addition, Census population estimates for the years 2001 through 2008 may also be conservative and underestimate population levels for the Town. Official population data from the 2010 Census will provide an updated picture for the actual Town population.

**Table 4.4: Population Estimates for Hilton Head Island**

Date	Population	% Change
1995	27,736	--
1996	29,088	4.9%
1997	29,801	2.5%
1998	30,450	2.2%
1999	31,181	2.4%
2000	33,862*	8.6%
2001	34,080	0.6%
2002	34,671	1.7%
2003	34,647	-0.1%
2004	34,683	0.1%
2005	34,855	0.5%
2006	34,271	-1.7%
2007	33,994	-0.8%
2008	33,913	-0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program, \*U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Population

### Projection Sources and Techniques

There are numerous factors involved when determining reliable numbers for the projected future permanent population of any town. It is important to note that a projection is actually an issue of policy such that the projected population for a time in the future is based on a certain understanding of desired policies concerning growth and development.

Until recently areas outside of the PUDs have had lower development pressures, but are now targeted as the PUDs are reaching build-out. It is possible that the Island will have reached build-out by 2025, although the concept of build-out is constantly changing as properties can be redeveloped and zoning regulations can change to accommodate higher (or lower) densities. New projections based on build-out scenarios should be calculated following the 2010 Census.

After release of the Census 2000 data on ly one method, which projected population using an annual growth rate of 3.3%, was close to the official Census count. This method used a steady 3.3 % rate of growth, which was the annual population increase from 1990 to 1995 per year, to project population.

A simple application of a constant 3.3% annual growth rate may be appropriate for years 2001 through 2005. However, impacts from a national recession, including modifications to lending practices from most financial institutions most likely contributed to a slower rate of growth. A more likely growth rate of 1%, for years 2006 through 2009, would provide a more accurate estimate of population. Table 4.5, Population Projections for Hilton Head Island, provides projections using both methods.

**Table 4.5: Population Projections for Hilton Head Island**

Year	Population Estimates	
	Constant 3.3% Growth Rate	Adjusted 1% Growth Rate 2006-2009
2000*	33,862	N/A
2001	34,979	N/A
2002	36,134	N/A
2003	37,326	N/A
2004	38,558	N/A
2005	39,830	N/A
2006	41,145	40,229
2007	42,503	40,631
2008	43,905	41,037
2009	45,354	41,448

Source: Town of Hilton Head Community Development Department \* U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Population

As part of the effort to develop a Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan (SBCRP) in 2005, estimates of existing and build-out populations were projected. To estimate the existing population, the number of housing units added since the 2000 Census inventory was calculated using building permit data. Applying the average household size figure for each census tract within the Town to the number of new units provided an estimated population for the year 2005 at 38,931. The build-out population was developed by using information for the Town's 69 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ). A most likely build-out scenario was developed for each TAZ to determine the amount and type of residential development that most likely remained for development. The numbers for projected or additional units was combined with the average household size to estimate a build-out population of 53,329, shown on table 4.6, Estimates of Existing (2005) Permanent Population and Permanent Population at Build-out, for the SBCRP.

**Table 4.6: Existing Permanent Population and Permanent Population at Build-out**

	Town of Hilton Head Island
Existing Pop. (2005)	38,931
Build-out Population	53,329

Source: Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan, Adopted 2006

An update to the Traffic Analysis Zones was completed by Town staff in 2009 to provide a current estimate and projected build-out population. Table 4.7, Population Projection from Analysis of TAZ, summarizes the results of this update. A range of occupancy rates was included to provide a detailed look at the potential build-out population. Finally, using the Town's current overall occupancy rates for households of 58.8% from the U.S. Census Bureau, the projected build-out population was calculated to be 53,988 persons.

**Table 4.7: Population Projection from Analysis of TAZ**

Housing Types	Estimated Quantity Build-Out	Average Persons Per Household	Maximum Population Estimate At Build-out	Estimated Population Occupancy Range		
				55%	65%	75%
Single Family Units	17,265	2.26	39,019	21,460	25,362	29,264
Multi-Family Units	18,561	2.70	50,115	27,563	32,575	37,586
Mobile Homes <sup>1</sup>	1,187	2.26	2,683	1,476	1,744	2,012
TOTAL	37,013	2.48	91,817	50,499	57,937	68,952

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department 2009 TAZ Analysis

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Population projections provide useful information that assists in determining future service needs and proper allocation of land uses.
- Providing updated population projections at a regular interval would provide beneficial information to decision makers in planning for the provision of services in the future.
- The impact of economic conditions, programs such as land acquisition, and changes to zoning all impact potential development within the Town and should be monitored.
- As an island with a large commuter work force and large visitor appeal, the Town of Hilton Head Island needs to have accurate counts of seasonal and daytime Island populations. The data is necessary for many reasons, in particular, to assist in planning for evacuations, traffic and transportation infrastructure improvements and the provision of other public services ( More information is in the Transportation and Community Facilities Elements).

### 4.3 Age Distribution

Data concerning the age of the Town of Hilton Head Island's population agree with the general perception that the Town's residents include all age groups with higher than average percentages of older adults and retirees ( Table 4.8, Age Distribution, 2000 Town, County, and State). The median age of permanent residents on the Island in 1990 was 39.9. This number increased to over 44 years in 1995 and 46 years by 2000.

Children and young adults comprise a much smaller percentage of the population on Hilton Head Island than they do in either Beaufort County or the State (24.1% versus 35.2 and 35.3% respectively). Only in the 25 to 44 year age category is there consistency of percentages within the Town, the County and the State. The age group 45 to 64 has a slightly larger percentage of the population than in the County or the State, while the 65 and older category has a much larger percentage.

A comparison of retirement-aged residents (65 and older) between the Town, County, and State over time shows that Hilton Head Island's population grew to 24.0% in 2000 from 20.3% in 1990, while it grew to 15.6% in Beaufort County from 12.3% in 1990, and in the State overall it grew only slightly, to 12.1% in 2000 from 11.4% in 1990.

Available and current data demonstrate that the population of the Town of Hilton Head Island has progressively grown older over the time span from 1975 to 2000 ( Table 4.9 , Age Distribution: 2000 Town, County, and State). During this period of rapid population growth, the Town has decreased steadily in the percentage of the population which is under 25 (down 15.8% between 1975 and 2000), while increasing in most categories above the 25 to 44 year old range.

The greatest share increase of one age category has been the increase in the 65 and older category from 9.9% in 1975 to 24.0% in 2000 (23.3% in 1995).

These changes in the age composition of the population should not be viewed in terms of a declining number of young people on the Island. The data simply indicate that as the total permanent population of the Town has grown at a fast rate over the time span from 1975 to 2000, the percentage share of that population growth in the older age groups has increased. This means that these age groups are growing at a faster rate than younger age groups. A combination of the continued influx of retirees to Hilton Head Island and the national trend of the aging baby-boomer population has contributed to this trend.



**Table 4.8: Age Distribution: 2000 Town, County, and State**

Age	Hilton Head Island	% of Total	Beaufort County	South Carolina
0-4	1,502	4.4	6.7	6.6
5-17	4,356	12.8	16.5	18.5
18-20	914	2.7	5.6	4.7
21-24	1,408	4.2	6.4	5.5
25-44	8,304	24.6	27.1	29.6
45-54	4,533	13.4	11.6	13.7
55-59	2,359	7.0	5.3	5.2
60-64	2,336	6.9	5.2	4.1
65 & Older	8,150	24.0	15.6	12.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Related data such as that for the Hilton Head Island schools, however, consistently indicate that the numbers of children are increasing at a rapid pace. So, while all age groups of the Town of Hilton Head Island's population continue to increase, the general aging of the population poses some interesting questions for consideration. Clearly, as the retiree population continues to grow, it will place increasing demand on medical facilities and services associated with aging. The way in which property may cycle through age groups in the future, however, is much more difficult to predict.

**Table 4.9: Trends in the Age Distribution of Hilton Head Island's Population**

Age	Percentages						% Change in Share
	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	1975-2000
0-4	7.9	5.4	6.1	5.9	4.9	4.4	-3.5
5-17	19.1	15.4	13.4	12.4	12.4	12.8	-6.3
18-20	4.3	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.3	2.7	-1.6
21-24	8.6	7.0	6.8	4.9	3.9	4.2	-4.4
25-44	27.6	27.6	32.5	31.0	27.4	24.6	-3.0
45-54	8.8	8.8	8.3	9.6	13.0	13.4	4.6
55-59	6.8	7.1	5.5	5.5	5.9	7.0	0.2
60-64	7.0	9.7	7.9	7.7	7.2	6.9	-0.1
65 & Older	9.9	15.7	16.8	20.3	23.3	24.0	14.1

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau: 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Census  
U.S. Census Bureau - Special Census for Hilton Head Island: 1975, 1985, 1995.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Provisions that allow for aging in place should be considered, especially as the population percentage of people over the age of 65 in the Town continues to grow. These include additional medical and health care services, transportation, and mobility and access to appropriate services.
- The gradual aging of the Town's population presents both new opportunities and new problems. The Town needs to work to insure that the problems are identified and solved. The Town needs to assist the community in best utilizing the skills that older citizens possess.
- Children and teenagers represent the long-term future of the community, as well as the County, State and Nation. Given the many pressures that young people face today, the Town needs to place more focus on the expectations, problems and needs of this segment of the population.

## 4.4 Racial Composition and Trends

The dynamics of the development of the Town of Hilton Head Island in recent decades have contributed significantly to the current racial composition of the Island as well as the trends of change in the past. Currently, the Town's population is predominately white with 85.3% of residents indicating this category in the 2000 Census. The share of white residents in the Town stands in contrast with Beaufort County and South Carolina, where the white population comprises 67.2% of the total population in the state and 70.7% in Beaufort County (Table 4.10, 2000 Racial Composition Town, County, and State). In 1990, the black population in the Town stood at 9.5%, and other races combined were 1% of the total population. By 2000 these percentages had changed to 8.3% for the black population and 6.4% for all other races (Table 4.11, Trends in Racial Composition of Hilton Head Island's Population).

**Table 4.10: 2000 Racial Composition Town, County, and State**

Race	Hilton Head Island	% of Total	Beaufort County	% of Total	South Carolina	% of Total
White	28,893	85.3	85,451	70.7	2,695,560	67.2
Black	2,797	8.3	29,005	24.0	1,185,216	29.5
Other	2,172	6.4	6,481	5.4	131,236	3.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

While the actual population of each racial segment has increased over the past 25 years, the trend has been an increasing percentage of the overall population being composed of whites and others, and a decreasing percentage of blacks. From 1975 to 2000, the white population has grown by over 5% of the share of the total population while blacks have lost over an 11% share of the total.

An important trend is the growth of the Hispanic population in the Town of Hilton Head Island. The Census Bureau determined Hispanic origin based on a 2000 Census form question that asked for self-identification of the person's origin or descent. Respondents were asked to select their origin (or the origin of some other household member) from a list of ethnic origins. Persons of Hispanic origin, in particular, are those who indicated that their origin was Mexican-American, Chicano, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Hispanic. Whereas from 1980 to 1990 the percentage of the Town's residents considering themselves to be of Hispanic origin increased from 1% to 1.4%, the corresponding percentage for 1995 was 4.2% and 11.5% for 2000. It is a reasonable assumption that the actual numbers and percentages of Hispanic residents in the Town are even higher than reported numbers.

This assumption is supported by National and regional evidence indicating that this population may be undercounted. Regardless, the Hispanic population has grown rapidly in recent years and its presence as an important component of the population will likely increase. It would appear that growth trends within the past 10 years outside of the Hispanic population have begun to stabilize somewhat. It can be reasonably expected that the Island's population will tend towards more racial and cultural diversity as the County and State do the same.

**Table 4.11: Trends in Racial Composition of Hilton Head Island's Population**

Race	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	% Change in Share 1975-1985	% Change in Share 1985-2000
White	5,212	9,659	15,488	21,208	25,547	28,893		
%	80.0	85.0	87.9	89.5	88.7	85.3	7.9	-2.6
Black	1,283	1,647	2,000	2,259	2,647	2,797		
%	19.7	14.5	11.3	9.5	9.2	8.3	-8.4	-3.0
Other	16	38	134	227	611	2,172		
%	0.3	0.5	0.8	1.0	2.1	6.4	0.5	5.6
*Hispanic % of Total Population	NA	1.0	1.3	1.4	4.2	11.5		10.2

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Census  
 U.S. Census Bureau - Special Census for Hilton Head Island: 1975, 1985, 1995.  
 Note: \*Not a race by U.S. Census Bureau definitions.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The Town population trends are moving toward a slightly more diverse population, which creates challenges and opportunities. Creating a healthy, self-sustaining community that encourages economic and cultural diversity by understanding the needs and assets of the Island's many ethnic groups is important.

## 4.5 Gender Composition

In 2000, there was an equal percentage of male and females on Hilton Head Island, and nearly an equal percentage in the County and State as well (Table 4.12, 2000 Gender Composition Town, County, and State and 4.13, Trends in Gender Composition of Hilton Head Island's Population). In both 1980 and 1990, there were more females than males on the Island, with 52.2% female versus 48.8% males.

**Table 4.12: 2000 Gender Composition Town, County, and State**

Gender	Hilton Head Island	% of Total	Beaufort County	% of Total	South Carolina	% of Total
Male	16,947	50.0	61,193	50.6	1,948,929	48.6
Female	16,915	50.0	59,744	49.4	2,063,083	51.4

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

**Table 4.13: Trends in Gender Composition of Hilton Head Island's Population**

Gender	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	% Change in Share 1975-1985	% Change in Share 1985-2000
Male	50.1	47.8	48.4	47.8	48.8	50.0	-1.7	1.6
Female	49.9	52.2	51.6	52.2	51.2	50.0	+1.7	-1.6

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Census  
 U.S. Census Bureau - Special Census for Hilton Head Island: 1975, 1985, 1995.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Facilities for males and females should be programmed at an even rate.

## 4.6 Households

The 2000 Census report for the Town of Hilton Head Island reported a total of 14,408 permanently occupied housing units, or households, on the Island. Statistics for average household size on Hilton Head Island show there to be smaller households in comparison with Beaufort County and South Carolina (Table 4.14, Household Size Town, County, and State). This fact is consistent with the age statistics for Hilton Head Island, which indicate smaller than average percentages of children and teenagers among the population. Household size has decreased incrementally from the years 1980 to 1995 on the Island, but has remained consistently smaller than comparable figures for the County and State. The 2000 Census showed a slight increase in the average household size to 2.32 persons per household, which is still lower than the County or State figures. Of the 33,862 population in 2000, 442 persons lived in group quarters as opposed to households (See the Housing Element for a discussion on group quarters).

**Table 4.14: Household Size for Town, County, and State**

Year	Hilton Head Island		Beaufort County		South Carolina	
	Number <sup>1</sup>	Size <sup>2</sup>	Number <sup>1</sup>	Size <sup>2</sup>	Number <sup>1</sup>	Size <sup>2</sup>
1970	NA	--	51,136	3.47	734,373	3.39
1975	NA	--	NA	--	NA	--
1980	4,634	2.45	65,364	2.84	1,029,981	2.93
1985	7,551	2.33	NA	--	NA	--
1990	10,334	2.29	30,712	2.60	1,258,044	2.68
1995	12,903	2.23	NA	--	NA	--
2000	14,408	2.32	45,532	2.51	1,533,854	2.53

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 1980, 1990, 2000

U.S. Census Bureau - Special Census for Hilton Head Island: 1975, 1985, 1995.

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Total number of households. <sup>2</sup> Calculated Average or Mean household size.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Smaller average household sizes may result in reduced impacts to community infrastructure such as roads, schools and sanitary sewers. When planning projects and programs these impacts should be considered.
- There is a segment of the population which cannot afford the high cost of housing on the Island. In order to insure the diversity of the Island's population and to develop a healthy self-sustaining community, additional moderate income housing is needed (See the Housing Element for additional details on the difficulties that many families face to find affordable housing).

## 4.7 Education

### School System and Student Population

The Town of Hilton Head Island's public schools are part of the Beaufort County School District. There is further division of public schools into sub districts, called clusters. Schools within the Hilton Head Cluster, and located on the Island include: Hilton Head High School, Hilton Head Middle School and Hilton Head School for the Creative Arts, Hilton Head Bachelorette Academy and Hilton Head Early Childhood Center. While enrollment in Beaufort County schools has increased during the past ten years, it has decreased on Hilton Head Island. There were 3,984 students enrolled in the public schools on Hilton Head Island in the 2008-2009 school-year, down from 4,088 in the school-year 2004-2005. In addition, projected enrollment for the school-year 2013-2014 indicates a further decrease in enrollment to 3,409 students. (For additional information concerning school enrollments and facilities, see the Community Facilities Element.)

Private education institutions that serve elementary and secondary students on Hilton Head Island include the Hilton Head Christian Academy, St. Francis Catholic School, and Hilton Head Preparatory School and Sea Pines Montessori Academy. In addition, several other private schools operate on Hilton Head Island. The total enrollment of Hilton Head Island's private schools was approximately 1,167 as of 2000. Following national trends, the Island is seeing continued growth in private education and the variety of educational sources.

### **Educational Attainment**

In a statistical comparison with Beaufort County and the State of South Carolina, the Town of Hilton Head Island's population appears to have reached a higher level in the area of educational attainment (Table 4.15, 2000 Educational Attainment Town, County, and State). Just over 7.6% of the resident population over the age of 25 has not completed a High School degree. This is compared to a 12.1% high school completion rate for Beaufort County and 23.7% for the State. However, the 2000 Census reveals that both the County and the State have decreased this discrepancy significantly in the last 10 years. The Town's educational attainment statistics (Table 4.16, Educational Attainment Town, County, and State) indicate that while the vast majority of the population over age 25 has at least some college education, further improvement in this area could be achieved.

**Table 4.15: 2000 Educational Attainment Town, County, and State**

Years of School Completed	All Residents 25 or Older					
	Hilton Head Island		Beaufort County		South Carolina	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-8	682	2.7	3,228	4.1	215,776	8.3
9-11	1,252	4.9	6,317	8.0	398,503	15.4
12 <sup>1</sup>	4,651	18.1	18,974	24.2	778,054	30.0
13-15 <sup>2</sup>	5,590	21.8	18,466	23.5	500,194	19.3
Associate's	1,686	6.6	5,434	6.9	173,428	6.7
Bachelor's	7,902	30.8	16,952	21.6	351,526	13.5
Graduate	3,876	15.1	9,131	11.6	178,529	6.9
Total	25,639	100	78,502	100	2,596,010	100

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 Notes: <sup>1</sup> High School Graduate, <sup>2</sup> "Some College" not resulting in a college degree

**Table 4.16: Trends in Educational Attainment, Hilton Head Island**

Years of School Completed	All Residents 25 or Older						
	1980		1990		2000		% Change in Share 1980 - 2000
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
0-8	441	5.6	291	1.7	682	2.7	-2.9
9-11	361	4.6	792	4.5	1,252	4.9	0.3
12	1,855	23.8	3,394	19.3	4,651	18.1	-5.7
13-15	1,815	23.3	4,533	25.8	5,590	21.8	-1.5
Associate's	*	--	1,108	6.3	1,686	6.6	0.3*
Bachelor's	3,334	42.7	5,362	30.5	7,902	30.8	-11.9
Graduate	*	--	2,213	12.1	3,876	15.1	3.0
Total	7,806		17,603		25,639		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

\* No 1980 data for Associates or Graduate degrees. Change in share comparison is from 1990 to 2000.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The decrease in enrollment and projected enrollment in the Hilton Head Island schools indicate that there are no immediate needs for additional school sites or expansion of existing facilities. This would also indicate that the number of households with school age children is projected to decrease. This may result in a further reduction in the average household size for the Town of Hilton Head Island.
- The Town has social capital from a highly educated citizenry. This provides the Town with some advantages as the boards, commissions and other volunteer positions, including community organizations, may be comprised of highly skilled professionals. It also provides a source of labor for future employers.

## 4.8 Income

### Median Household Income

The Median Household Income level for the Town of Hilton Head Island in 2000 was \$60,438 per year (Table 4.17, Median Household Income). Not surprisingly, this figure is considerably higher than that of Beaufort County (\$46,992) or South Carolina (\$37,082).

**Table 4.17: Median Household Income**

	Median Household Income			
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Hilton Head Island	NA	\$23,854	\$42,999	\$60,438
Beaufort County	NA	\$15,490	\$30,450	\$46,992
South Carolina	\$6,835	\$14,711	\$26,256	\$37,082

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

### Per Capita Income

The Town of Hilton Head Island's Per Capita Income is higher than that of the County and State (Table 4.18, Trends in Per Capita Income Town, County, and State). At \$36,621, the Per Capita Income of the Town is 41% greater than the National average of \$21,587.

**Table 4.18: Trends in Per Capita Income Town, County, and State**

	Per Capita Income			
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Hilton Head Island	NA	\$13,149	\$25,171	\$36,621
Beaufort County	\$2,243	\$6,863	\$15,213	\$25,377
South Carolina	\$2,313	\$5,886	\$11,897	\$18,795

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

### Income Distribution

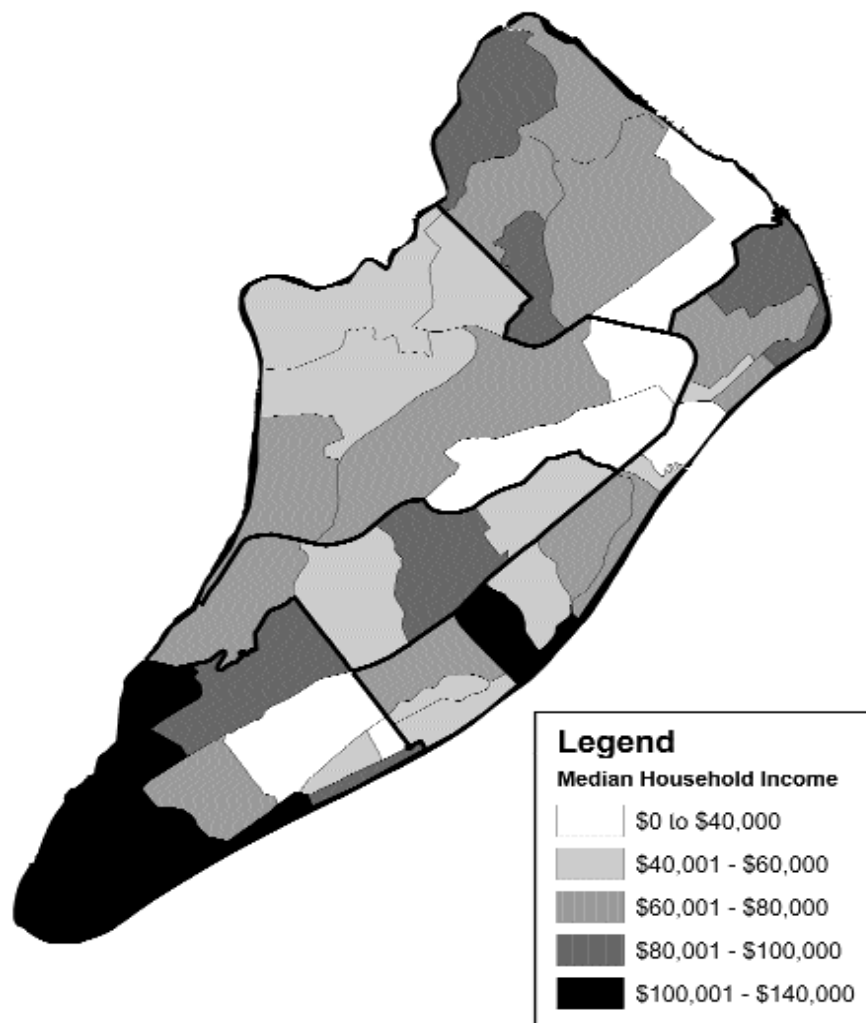
Despite higher than average Median Household Income and Per Capita Income levels, the Town of Hilton Head Island does have its share of residents that are not financially stable (Table 4.19, Income Distribution, 2000 Town, County, and State). The U.S. Census Bureau produces annual reports detailing poverty thresholds by size of family. In 1999, 4.7% of the Town's families lived below the poverty level. To be considered below the poverty level a family of four would have to make less than \$17,029 annually. In 1999, 2,442 Hilton Head Island residents, or about 7.3% of the total population, were below the federally calculated poverty level. Of these 2,442 residents, Census data indicate that 528 were children under the age of 18. The Federal government uses this figure as an indication of the existence and extent of child poverty. When consideration is given to the higher than average cost of living and housing in the Town of Hilton Head Island relative to the region, those in lower and middle income categories may have difficulty living on the Island and making ends meet. The income distribution on the Island as determined in the 2000 Census is reflected in Figure 4.2, Income Distribution, 2000.



**Table 4.19: Income Distribution, 2000 Town, County, and State**

Income Range	Households	Percent of Households		
	Hilton Head Island	Hilton Head Island	Beaufort County	South Carolina
Less than \$10,000	254	2.5	4.7	7.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	173	1.7	3.6	5.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,303	6.9	10.0	12.5
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,310	8.1	11.7	13.3
\$35,000 to \$49,999	2,136	13.5	16.9	18.7
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2,125	20.1	21.9	22.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,900	15.8	12.4	10.6
\$100,000 or more	1,252	31.3	18.7	10.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

**Figure 4.2: Income Distribution, 2000**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

### **Source of Income**

The Census Bureau calculates household income amounts from various sources (Table 4.20, Income Distribution, 2000). For the 2000 Census they calculated five categories of income type and the mean value of each type for the Town of Hilton Head Island. Of the total number of households on the Island (14,409), 10,356 households, or 71.9%, drew wage and salary income with a mean value of \$70,621 in 1999 dollars. This compares with 76.8% for Beaufort County with a mean annual salary of \$55,744 and 79.9% for the State of South Carolina with a mean annual salary of \$47,936. The number of Hilton Head Island households with self-employment income derived from activities other than farming totaled 2,055 (1,837 in the 1990 Census) and had a mean income of over \$53,000. Town of Hilton Head Island households draw a significant amount of their income from retirement and Social Security sources. A total of 4,128, or 28.6% in 2000 and 2,489 households, or 24% in 1990 of all households, received retirement income from a source other than social security in 1999. The average amount of non-social security retirement income was \$32,558 in 2000 up from \$21,841 in 1989. Social security income was received by 5,554 households in 2000, up from 3,381 in 1990 for an average of \$14,515 in 2000 and \$9,865 in 1989. Over one-third of all households in the Town of Hilton Head Island receive social security benefits.

**Table 4.20: Income Type by Household, 2000 Town, County, and State**

Income Type	Households	Percent of Households		
	Hilton Head Island	Hilton Head Island	Beaufort County	South Carolina
Wages and Salaries	10,356	71.9	76.8	79.9
Mean Amount, yearly		\$70,621	\$55,744	\$47,936
Self-employed	2,055	14.3	13.3	9.9
Mean Amount, yearly		\$53,854	\$37,479	\$25,904
Interest, Dividends, Rentals	8,091	56.1	41.1	27.2
Mean Amount, yearly		\$30,396	\$23,580	\$10,572
Retirement	4,128	28.6	25.4	17.9
Mean Amount, yearly		\$32,558	\$28,523	\$16,933
Social Security	5,554	38.5	30.4	26.5
Mean Amount, yearly		\$14,515	\$12,891	\$10,686
Public Assistance	176	1.2	1.9	2.5
Mean Amount, yearly		\$5,079	\$2,320	\$2,145
Other Income	1,877	13.0	14.0	13.2
Mean Amount, yearly		\$15,986	\$11,876	\$7,551

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Income other than those from wages, retirement, and social security in 1999 came from Federal public assistance which was received by 176 households (228 in 1989). The average amount of public assistance received per household was \$5,079 (\$4,171 in 1989) annually.

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The Town has a wealthy population relative to the County and State. Increased financial service sector operations may develop to support the needs associated with this population.
- Today, the Town is a diverse community that includes families and residents of all ages, educational and economic achievements, as well as many races. This increasingly diverse population will present challenges and opportunities that are not currently being addressed. The Town needs to identify these challenges and opportunities to help the Island be a more sustainable community in the future.

## 4.10 Goals and Implementation Strategies

### Goals

#### 4.1 Demographics

- A. The goal is to acquire accurate Census data.
- B. The goal is to broaden the types of data available, such as health statistics or more detailed economic information.
- C. The goal is to maintain information to track the Island's actual daytime and seasonal populations including the impacts of the commuting workforce and the seasonal tourist population.

#### 4.2 Population Diversity

- A. The goal is to create a healthy, self-sustaining community that encourages economic and cultural diversity by understanding the needs and assets of each of the Island's many different communities. By better understanding these needs and assets the Town will work to become less dependent on the workforce residing on the mainland and ensure the ability of different communities to work and live on Hilton Head Island.
- B. The goal is to work with the appropriate organizations that can help the Town to best utilize and support its older population. Assist local businesses and organizations in properly implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to insure that the Town's infrastructure is not an impediment to this population.
- C. The goal is to actively promote interaction among Hilton Head Island's numerous communities. Also, facilitate recognition of these communities by including neighborhoods in non-master planned Island areas alongside the Island's well-recognized planned communities. By bringing the various communities together, the Town will create a more complete identity.

#### 4.3 Community Building

- A. The goal is to support moderate income housing in an effort to develop a healthy self-sustaining community. See the Housing Element for needs, goals, and implementation strategies regarding this issue.
- B. The goal is to develop and support programs and activities to meet the needs of its diverse population and age groups.
- C. The goal is to emphasize "quality of life" issues when reviewing proposed residential developments.

### Implementation Strategies

#### 4.1 Demographics

- A. Participate with Beaufort County's "Complete the Count Committee" to assist in developing an accurate Census count. This will facilitate analysis of data over a long time period and will allow for the tracking of various trends for the Island in the future.
- B. Endorse and fund future efforts to maintain the most current and accurate demographic data for Hilton Head Island.
- C. Request mid-decennial Census counts to provide Hilton Head Island with a more accurate and detailed look at population shifts.
- D. Research other sources of demographic information, such as the University of South Carolina or the S.C. Office of Research and Statistical Services.
- E. Update official Town demographic data on the Town's World Wide Web site regularly.
- F. Develop and update a demographic profile for the Town.
- G. Track the daytime population on Hilton Head Island by coordinating a system to monitor commuting traffic onto Hilton Head Island with estimates of the tourist population, daily workforce and current permanent resident population estimates. This will allow the Town to maintain a useful and accurate estimate of the actual Island population at any point in time.

## 4.2 Population Diversity

- A. Organize an outreach program to study the culture, lifestyles, landmarks, etc. of various communities and groups to insure that opportunities and infrastructure exists so that all groups can enjoy a high quality of life.
- B. Gather information to help determine appropriate activities that support the proper development of the Island's youth.
- C. Cooperate with organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce to promote further growth of the family and resident young adult population while continuing to promote the Island as a desirable destination for retirees and vacationers.
- D. Pursue programs that meet the special needs of groups such as the elderly, youth, disabled, Native Islanders and the Hispanic population. Information from the regular tracking of demographic trends can inform the Town as to what groups on the Island may need specific attention.
- E. Identify methods to support construction of new moderate income housing. See the Housing Element for additional needs, goals, and implementation strategies on this issue.

## 4.3 Community Building

- A. Promote community building efforts among the Island's communities.
- B. Foster events, organizations and infrastructure that encourage involvement from the Island's entire population. Community and recreational activities can help to bridge geographical and social boundaries by involving children, adults and seniors from all cultural and ethnic groups on the Island.
- C. Identify and support the many different organizations and groups that currently are involved in community building efforts.
- D. Create incentives for redevelopment that opt for a planned community approach with goals of diversity in housing cost and transportation modes.
- E. Adopt flexible ordinances for planned unit developments (PUD), cluster homes and other innovations in housing development that meet workforce housing needs.
- F. Amend the Town's regulations to require interconnection between developments to promote the establishment of neighborhoods and to provide safe and convenient access to neighborhood level public facilities, such as parks and schools.
- G. Establish a mechanism to evaluate the quality of life likely to be experienced in proposed developments.

## 5 Housing

*To promote and facilitate entrepreneurial housing initiatives that will result in the development of diverse housing types for all income levels on Hilton Head Island, and to support affordable housing initiatives in the region to supplement housing on the Island*

### Introduction

Beginning with Charles Fraser and the Sea Pines community, modern housing development on the Island has been driven predominantly by private developers responding to market demands. Early housing developments included housing types that appealed mainly to second home buyers and vacationers seeking to enjoy this beautiful coastal barrier island. Since that time, Hilton Head Island has evolved from a second home destination into a year-round community that is known as a place to live as well as vacation. This evolution has resulted in considerable change to the existing housing stock as well as to future housing demands. Factors that often determine housing selection include personal choice, financial limitation, value, safety and location.

In many communities, the public sector has the responsibility to ensure adequate, safe housing, especially for low, and very low income families, elderly and other disadvantaged segments of the population. The Town has adopted development regulations and building codes that guide the private sector in the development and construction of housing. In addition, over 70% of the Island has been developed as private planned communities (PUDs), such as Sea Pines that have restrictive covenants that limit the type as well as the character of housing development.

The ultimate goal of planning for housing activities and programs on the Island is to increase housing opportunities that meet the needs of existing and future populations as well as attract new investment to the community. This Element will examine housing development trends and characteristics along with the impact that population, land use, and economic development have on housing. The elements within this plan are independent; therefore many of the characteristics described within this Element are further discussed within other Elements of this Plan.

### 5.1 Housing Units and Tenure

Data on housing trends can be derived from a number of sources. The U.S. Census Bureau gathers information such as population, housing and demographics for communities around the nation that can be used to evaluate historical trends and to project future needs. The Decennial Census was conducted on the Island in 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. In addition, special census counts were conducted for the Island in 1975, 1985 and 1995 to provide interim information. In addition, the American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that is designed to provide communities a fresh look at how they are changing. In 2008, the ACS released its first multi-year estimates based on ACS data collected from 2005 through 2007. These three year estimates of demographic, social, economic and housing characteristics are available for geographic areas with a population of 20,000 or more. Building permit data from the Town of Hilton Head Island's Community Development Department can also provide insight into the type of building and development permits that are being issued on the Island.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000, a housing unit is defined as a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied (or if vacant, is intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which occupants live and eat separately from any other persons in the building and which have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall.

### **Housing Growth on the Island**

In 1985 the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that 17,740 housing units were developed on the Island. In 1990, there were an estimated 21,509 units. From 1995 to 2000 the number of housing units increased at a rate of 15% and from 2000-2007 housing units increased at a rate of 16%. The next Decennial Census will be conducted in 2010 and will provide the information necessary to evaluate the most recent trends. Table 5.1, Housing Growth Rates shows the total number of housing units on the Island from 1985 to 2007.

Between 1985 and 2007 the number of housing units increased by 61% on the Island with there being 17,740 housing units in 1985, which grew to an estimated 28,557 units in 2007.

**Table 5.1: Housing Growth Rates**

	1985**	1990	1995	2000	2007*	% Change, 1990-2000	% Change 2000- 2007	Total % Change, 1985-2007
Total Housing Units	17,740	21,509	25,438	24,647	28,557	15%	16%	61%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census, 1985 and 1995 Special Census and \* 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates. \*\*1985 Special Census was first official census count since Town incorporation in 1983.

Town of Hilton Head Island building permits data indicates that during the early 2000's housing development spiked, which can be attributed to a booming real estate market, lower interest rates and more flexible financing options from lenders. This also helped to facilitate more second home purchases, which is a major contributor to the Island's economy.

More recently, however, these rates have slowed due to the impacts of a shrinking economy and the contraction of financing options for housing development. In 2005, the number of new construction single family permits issued began to decrease. Similarly, the number of building permits issued for the construction of multi-family/commercial buildings also declined, but at a slower rate than single family permits.

From 2000-2007, the number of single family and multi-family/commercial building permits issued for renovations and additions increased. Along with the current state of the economy, the amount of vacant land on the Island has continued to decrease. This has resulted in a shift from new construction to renovations and additions.

### **Housing Vacancy Rates**

When evaluating housing trends, vacancy rates are important indicators of the stability of the housing market. There were 28,557 housing units located within the Town of Hilton Head Island in 2007, an increase of 16% from 24,647 - in 2000. While there was an increase in the total units there was also an increase in the percentage of vacant units. The high percentage of vacant units can be attributed to seasonal population and resort and second home accommodations. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a vacant unit as a housing unit in which no one is living on Census Day (April 1), unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. Units temporarily occupied at the time of enumeration by individuals who have a usual home elsewhere are classified as vacant. Table 5.2, Housing Vacancy Rates, indicates the vacancy characteristics for the Town from 1985 to 2007.



**Table 5.2: Housing Vacancy Rates**

	1985**	1990	1995	2000	2007*	% Change, 1990-2000	% Change 2000-2007	% Change, 1985-2007
Housing Units	17,740	21,509	25,438	24,647	28,557	15%	16%	61%
Total Vacant	10,189	11,165	12,535	10,239	13,132	-8%	28%	29%
Percent Vacant	57%	52%	49%	42%	46%	-10%	4%	-11%
Total Occupied	7,551	10,344	12,903	14,408	15,425	39%	7%	104%
Percent Occupied	43%	48%	51%	58%	54%	10%	-4%	11%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census, 1985 and 1995 Special Census and \* 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates. \*\*1985 Special Census was first official census count since Town incorporation in 1983.

As noted in the Land Use Element, from 2000 until 2007 the number of single family and commercial/multi-family building permits issued for renovations and additions increased. Due to the limited amount of land available for construction a decrease in the number of new building permits show a shift to improvements and renovations of existing housing stock. Beginning in 2005 the number of new construction single family building permits issued decreased. The number of building permits for new construction of commercial/multi-family buildings issued since 2005 has declined, but at a slower rate than the single family permits. The net result from 2000 to 2007 has been an increase in total housing units of 16%.

The slow-down in the number of new construction permits issued for housing follows economic trends. The number of permits issued from 2000-2007 can be attributed to the real estate boom, lower interest rates, and flexible financing options from lenders. This also facilitated second home purchases.

### **Housing Types and Forms**

The types and functions of housing units on the Island are also important to understand the unique nature of the Island's housing development. There are various forms or types of housing units on the Island, including detached single family homes and attached duplexes, multi-family structures and mobile homes. There are also various types of housing in terms of function, including traditional apartment complexes, condominiums, both long and short term home rentals, extended stay hotels/motels, seasonal homes and timeshares or interval occupancy units. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, single family is defined as a detached household unit or attached single family with only one attached wall, for example a duplex or town home where only one common wall is shared. Multi-family units are defined as any other housing structure with more than 2 household units, apartments, or condominiums.

The Town of Hilton Head Island Land Management Ordinance (LMO) includes specific definitions for a single family detached residence and a single family attached residence as well as a multi-family residence. A single family detached residence is a structure containing one dwelling unit that is free standing. A single family attached residence is a structure containing more than one single family dwelling unit in which the units are physically attached, and each has its own separate exterior entrance way on a separately owned lot. A multi-family residence is a building or parcel containing three or more dwelling units.

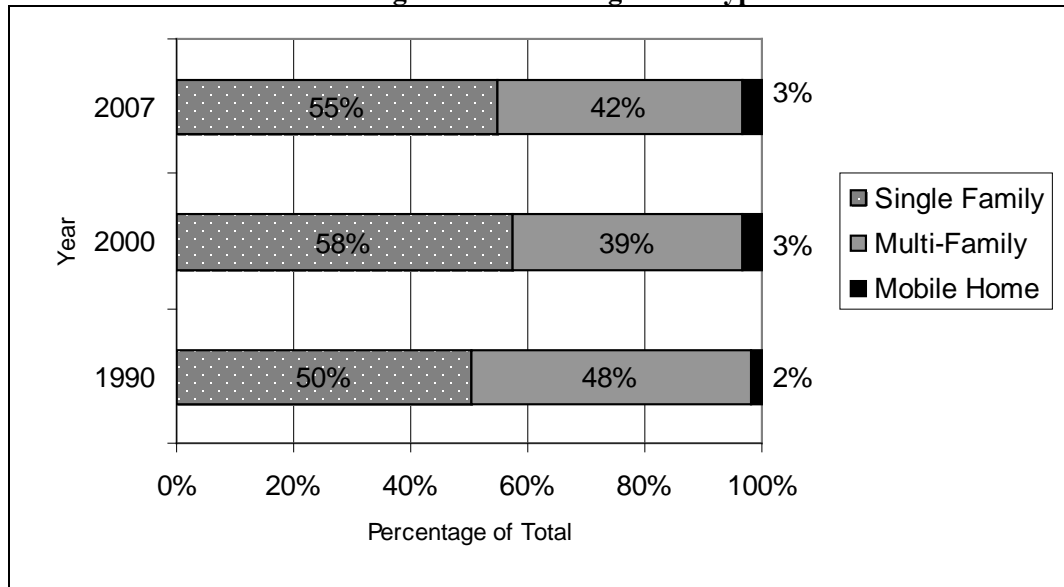
The data shown in Table 5.3, Housing Unit by Structure Type, refers to housing units as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. This table shows that the number of housing units by structure type in each category has increased since 1990; the number of mobile homes has more than doubled between 1990 and 2007, increasing from 419 to 963.

**Table 5.3: Housing Units by Structure Type**

	1990	2000	2007*	% Change 1990 - 2000	% Change 2000 - 2007
Single Family	10,775	14,157	15,627	24%	9%
Multi-Family	10,174	9,651	11,967	-5%	19%
Mobile Homes <sup>1</sup>	419	806	963	48%	16%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,368</b>	<b>24,614</b>	<b>28,557</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 1990 & 2000 Census; \*2005-2007 American Community Survey Estimates

The information shown in Table 5.3, Housing Units by Structure Type, also indicates that in 1990 there were 601 fewer multi-family units than there were single family units. This trend continues as the gap increases in 2000, with 4,506 fewer multi-family units than single family units. In 2007 the gap narrowed to 3,660 fewer multi-family units than single family units. Overall this indicates a declining trend in the development of multi-family units on the Island. Figure 5.1, Housing Units by Type, illustrates a comparison of the three classifications of housing types in 2007.

**Figure 5.1: Housing Units Type**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 1990 & 2000 Census; \*2005-2007 American Community Survey Estimates

### **Housing Tenure and Household Size**

Housing tenure refers to how a housing unit is financed by its occupant. Typical housing arrangements include renting, owning or a combination of the two. According to the American Community Survey's estimates from 2005-2007, three out of four households were owner occupied on the Island, as shown in Table 5.4, Home Ownership Estimates 2000-2007. In 2006, Beaufort County, the Town of Bluffton and the Town of Hilton Head Island all cooperated to adopt a regional plan for southern Beaufort County. Based on this plan's population projections, the average household size for owner occupied households is 2.26 persons, which is slightly less than renter occupied housing units at an average of 2.54 persons (Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan, 2006).

**Table 5.4: Home Ownership Estimates 2000-2007**

	Number	Percent
Occupied Housing Units	15,425	100%
Owner Occupied	11,709	75.90%
Renter Occupied	3,716	24.10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-year Estimates

### Seasonal Housing Units

The U.S. Census Bureau defines seasonal use as housing units used or intended for use only in certain seasons, for weekends, or other occasional use throughout the year. Hilton Head Island is a destination for visitors and second home owners. Figures from the 2000 U.S. Census indicate that there were 7,360 seasonal housing units located on the Island. Using figures from the U.S. Census 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimate for total vacant housing units in 2007 (13,132) and the same percentage difference (71%) between the total vacant housing units and seasonal housing units from the 2000 Census, it can be projected that there was a total of 9,324 seasonal units in 2007. When data from the 2010 Census is received the seasonal housing figures can be adjusted to reflect the most current information.

Short term rental development and interval occupancy developments are also addressed in the Land Use Element of this Plan. An inventory of interval occupancy developments is available in that Element. This type of housing serves to meet the need of our seasonal and visitor populations. Based on 2007 data gathered by Town staff, there are 3,537 interval occupancy units on the Island. It is important to note that during the building permit process interval occupancy developments are categorized as multi-family structures. If a multi-family structure is permitted with no indication or intention to be used for interval occupancy, but is subsequently converted, there may be no reclassification in the Town's records. Interval occupancy units are permitted within three zoning districts: WMU (Water Front Mixed Use), CFB (Central Forest Beach District) and RD (Resort Development). It should also be noted that owner occupied housing units are taxed at a 4% property tax rate and non-owner occupied housing units are taxed at a 6% property tax rate.

### Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Housing tenure, or financing methods for housing, is impacted by various factors such as housing supply and demand, lifestyle choices, and employment or income status. In addition, seasonal population trends of the Town affect the number of vacant structures and also have a direct effect on the ownership type. Due to the character of the Island as a popular location for visitors and part time residents, depending on the season units may be vacant during various times. Existing structures should be refurbished and renovated to reflect the needs and wants of the current market when possible.
- Although, an increase in the total number of housing units contributes to the economic tax base for the Town, it is important that both the quantity as well as quality of the housing stock is maintained to sustain current and future population and overall property values. As the amount of available land declines for new development, it will be very important to maintain a high quality housing stock on residential properties. In addition, the availability of various housing types is important for the housing market viability to accommodate the diverse needs of the Island's population.
- An increase in home ownership is important for a community because it enables the homeowner to establish a deeper connection with the community. Therefore, it is important to strive for increased opportunities for home ownership as a housing option. Second homes, vacation and seasonal homes as well as timeshare units comprise a large portion of the Island's housing stock. The high number of second homes impacts the percentage of total owner-occupied homes Town-wide and doesn't necessarily portray an accurate assessment of home ownership status on the Island.
- It is also important to acknowledge that mobile homes may be more vulnerable during storms and other significant weather events, such as tornados, hurricanes or floods. Fluxuations to the number, as well as areas of concentration of mobile homes, should be monitored to ensure public safety.
- The ownership structure for interval occupancy units, with multiple owners having a stake in individual units, presents a challenge in cooperative efforts to redevelop the properties and keep them current with changing trends, desires and market demands. Incentives to encourage these types of communities to tackle their own individual challenges should be considered in order for the Town to remove barriers to redevelopment that may be particular to timeshare developments. Additional issues include cooperation with property management agencies and archaic covenants for condos and timeshare developments.

## 5.2 Housing Opportunities

### Obtainable Housing

What is obtainable housing for one family is different from what is obtainable for another family. In some instances obtainable may refer to housing units managed by Beaufort County Housing Authority, a house located in a gated community, a modest mobile home, or other type of housing. Obtainable housing is dependent on many variables and factors, however, most directly associated with the financial ability to pay for the housing that is needed or desired.

### Workforce Housing & Affordable Housing

Workforce housing is a widely acceptable term that refers to housing that is available for the working class segment of the population. It often means housing that is available for gainfully employed people such as teachers, police officers, firemen, government employees and other workforce populations who are essential for the function of a community or those who typically work in the service sectors. The accepted definition of affordable housing by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is any housing that requires 30% or less of the household income to pay for housing related expenses.

While workforce housing isn't specific to any one type of housing, Section 8 housing is managed by the Beaufort County Housing Authority. Section 8 housing is a type of Federal assistance provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Section 8 housing is not a type of housing form, but rather the type of housing assistance that is granted in the form of vouchers. A voucher program assists in bridging the gap for low income households by providing rental assistance for the monthly cost of market rate units. As of June 2009, the Beaufort County Housing Authority reported that there were five developments on the Hilton Head Island that have accepted vouchers to supplement rents. They include developments commonly referred to as: 90 Dillon Apartments, Hilton Head Beach and Tennis, Cedar Well Apartments, Marshpoint, and The Spa.

### Luxury Housing

Hilton Head Island has many large, well-appointed homes. The high cost of land has also led to an increase in the number of luxury homes located on the Island. This is a popular option for seasonal housing as a means for many families or visitors to stay in one, very large home.

### Assisted Living

Nine facilities on the Island focus their housing on a segment of the population that needs assistance for various reasons including elder care or Alzheimer's care. The assisted living facilities have various levels of care, including individual, shared rooms, or more independent apartment style units. Table 5.5, Assisted Living Facilities, shows the facilities including the number of beds or units that are available on the Island.

**Table 5.5: Assisted Living Facilities**

Facility	# of Beds	# of Units
Broad Creek Health Care/Tidepoint	50	311
Fraser Center/Seabrook	44	207
The Preston/The Cypress	55	280
Life Care	88	NA
Hawthorne Inn	51	NA
Palm Meadows Court	36	NA
Palm Meadows Village	52	NA
Carolina House	72	NA
Indigo Pines	NA	118
TOTAL	448	916

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Fire Department and Community Development Department, June 8, 2009

NA = not applicable

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Affordable or obtainable housing availability poses many challenges in most communities. The Town of Hilton Head Island is not unique in the challenges that the community faces relative to the creation of obtainable housing. High or increasing land costs, coupled with declining availability of developable land on the Island, drives up the cost of many housing options, often above more traditional “obtainable” price levels. Construction costs, particularly those associated with building to hurricane standards, statutory requirements such as point of sale taxation and other economic drivers are barriers to keeping housing costs affordable. The Town has attempted to engage in policies and projects that encourage affordable housing, such as regulations and incentives in the Land Management Ordinance, and partnerships with developers; however, these programs were not successful. Affordable housing remains a challenge for both local and regional communities.
- A sustainable workforce is essential to the future economic potential of the Island. To be sustainable over the horizon envisioned by this Comprehensive Plan, the workforce needs appropriate education, training, and access to affordable housing. While efforts for education and training may be broadly addressed on a regional basis, the current strategy for affordable housing seems to hinge on an off-Island labor pool. While this may meet short term (3-5 years) needs, potential development in Jasper County and other areas west of the Island may create competitive pressure on this off-Island labor pool and may threaten the Island's access to a viable work force.
- It is important that the Town of Hilton Head Island assists in the ability for the population to age in place. As the average age of the population gets older, the needs of the community change. It is important that housing options accommodate these changes. It is also important that the family and friends that support aging family members are able to reside in close proximity. The location of assisted living facilities is also important. Special complementary land uses and associated infrastructure are needed. When one ages in place, it is important that one is living in close proximity to basic services, for instance banks, grocery stores and medical services and that provisions for emergency evacuation are considered.
- Although current market conditions have resulted in reduced housing values and costs, the long-term rise in cost of housing will threaten aging in place. There are several solutions to the rising housing cost problems. One is accessory apartments, “granny-flats” or accessory dwelling units (ADU) built within a single-family home or separate structure on the same lot that functions as an apartment. The additional unit can house a family member or professional providing health care to reduce cost or it might be rented for additional revenue.
- The LMO (Land Management Ordinance) counts these units toward the density in most residential zones. Advocates point to benefits for the community in the form of higher tax revenue. Other solutions include co-housing, home sharing, taxation, and financial tools such as reverse mortgage that can pay for home modifications and health care. There are many advantages to the solutions mentioned but communities must make the general public aware of such opportunities.
- There are additional groups that will grow this market area. First are the multigenerational households, including aging parents moving in and 20 somethings moving back with their parents. Second, low wages jobs and high housing cost forces several non-family members into occupying a house. Finally, there is a growing trend of retirees becoming renters. The home in some communities will no longer be the great investment it once was, or the kids are gone and the house is too big, the taxes are high, and mowing the grass is not as much fun as traveling. Millions of baby boomers will sell their home and invest.
- The replacement of the older housing stock to larger homes, typically located in close proximity to the beach, is a trend that has the potential to change the character of Island neighborhoods. The Forest Beach and Folly Field neighborhoods saw this change occurring and reacted with the adoption of regulations that protect the existing neighborhood character by limiting the size of homes and requiring additional setbacks. The conversion of small homes to large luxury homes threatens the traditional single family character of some neighborhoods and can also put a strain on the infrastructure of these areas, which were planned and built to accommodate single family development, not short term rentals utilized by as many as five families or more at one time.



### **5.3 Barriers to Affordable Housing**

The State of South Carolina requires that municipalities indicate any barriers to the community's access to affordable housing. Many of these barriers are not unique to the Town of Hilton Head Island and are similarly faced by the region as a whole.

#### **Land Costs**

Land costs are a limiting factor in the construction of affordable or workforce housing units. The increasing cost of land is related to the high demand for water-front lots and the convenient access to the beach which is provided by other properties within the Town. As the availability of land decreases, costs for land increases often creating larger scale developments that have the potential to deliver higher profits to offset the cost of land, ultimately decreasing the affordability of housing units.

#### **Land Supply**

Land is a finite resource as the Town approaches build out. There is less land available for housing and the land that is available is very expensive. The remaining vacant land on the Island is not only limited but often challenged with costs associated with providing utilities and access.

#### **Construction Costs**

Increasing construction costs is also a factor that creates a barrier to the development of affordable housing, such as the costs of materials, delivery of the materials to the Island, as well as increased labor costs. Building codes, flood plain requirements, and costs associated with building in an area susceptible to hurricanes can significantly impact the affordability of housing. Fees required by government agencies also increase the cost of affordable housing, such as impact fees, building permits, licensing fees, utility service fees and other outside agency approvals.

#### **Long Term Sustainability**

The initial construction costs are a barrier to affordable housing as well as the increased living expenses associated with residing in the Town. Much of the housing in the Town and land available for housing is subject to floodplain insurance requirements as well as other insurance requirements, such as wind and hail. Many residential developments operate under organized homeowner's associations, which also require payment of fees to cover costs associated with common open space, amenities and infrastructure.

#### **Marketability and Potential Profit**

Because of the challenges that developers already face with construction in a coastal area and all of the barriers listed here, the potential profit is always a factor for the private developer. Developers often strive for the 'highest and best use' which, given the barriers to affordable housing, does not typically result in the construction of housing units geared to the workforce population.

#### **Attitudes towards Affordable Housing**

The "NIMBY" syndrome, "Not in My Backyard", is a common sentiment toward affordable housing on the Island. This is a typical response to affordable housing in some communities. Many people make assumptions that affordable housing increases crime and aesthetically unpleasing homes and buildings. This is not necessarily true; however, turning around the NIMBY syndrome is a challenge that developers of affordable housing face in this community.

#### **Lack of Developer Incentives**

Developers strive for the highest profit margin, which is determined by various factors. The cost of developing housing in the Town is high based on many factors which have previously been discussed throughout this Plan. The lack of development incentives, such as increased density, decreased parking, increased height standards, etc. which allow the developer to build more than otherwise allowed by Town regulations and requirements do not exist in current codes and may, when coupled with the other barriers, also become a barrier in itself to the construction or availability of affordable housing.



## 5.4 Goals and Implementation Strategies

Key housing issues were identified based on public input that was received throughout this process and data that was collected by Town staff. Housing issues are not isolated and only those that affect the municipal limits of the Town of Hilton Head Island; therefore, the goals and implementation strategies should be approached regionally and collectively, integrating a palette of solutions.

### Goals

#### 5.1 Housing Units and Tenure

- A. The goal is to encourage redevelopment of multi-family residential structures to meet market demands and new trends.
- B. The goal is to encourage occupancy of existing residential properties.
- C. The goal is to consider incentives that remove barriers to redevelopment and encourage redevelopment of properties that have multiple owners.
- D. The goal is to support programs aimed at increasing home ownership.
- E. The goal is to continue focusing on requiring high quality development to meet future housing needs.
- F. The goal is to monitor availability of housing types and occupancy rates to meet housing demands.

#### 5.2 Housing Opportunities

- A. The goal is to engage in projects that encourage affordable/workforce housing on the Island or within the region.
- B. The goal is to look at housing opportunities as a mechanism to maintain its essential workforce.
- C. The goal is to encourage housing options that provide opportunities for residents to age in place.
- D. The goal is to monitor changing demographics and trends in housing development to provide housing options that meet market demands.
- E. The goal is to consider residential overlay districts to maintain traditional single family character.

#### 5.3 Barriers to Affordable Housing

- A. The goal is to address housing issues using a systemic approach that integrates other elements such as economic development, transportation and land use.
- B. The goal is to consider mechanisms that decrease or eliminate barriers to affordable housing.
- C. The goal is to address affordable housing considering Town and regional solutions.
- D. The goal is to include partnerships and the cooperation with the entire community.

### Implementation Strategies

#### 5.1 Housing Units and Tenure

- A. Provide flexibility in the LMO to allow for accessory dwelling units as a housing option.
- B. Provide flexibility in the LMO to provide options to the traditional housing or subdivision standards in the form of family compounds. Look to other communities, particularly Beaufort County for examples on how to allow for family compounds which may assist in removing the barrier to legal and title issues associated with heirs property.
- C. Educate owners of heirs property on methods to clear titles and to build houses on their land. Pursue partnerships with organizations such as the Penn Center, a credit counseling agency or legal aid agency to overcome title and credit issues preventing land owners from building homes.
- D. Revise the LMO to include flexible zoning options and tools that allow a mix of uses for residential over commercial or other live work units. This may be a tool to foster both a commercial and housing option as well as a means to provide affordable housing and to reduce the amount of infrastructure necessary to travel from home to work or other basic services. Other LMO revisions may include regulations to facilitate the conversion and redevelopment of empty commercial or office space to residential units or allow for a mix of residential within the redevelopment.

- E. Encourage owners of small properties to assemble land resources through density bonuses tied to increased property sizes.
- F. Address ownership or heirs property issues with tools such as transfer of development rights or the purchase of development rights.

## 5.2 Housing Opportunities

- A. Develop alternative approaches to affordable housing such as viewing it as community infrastructure and establish a 'minimum level of service' with a focus on transportation and access issues and location related to concentration of employment centers. The level of service concept could be based on a goal of insuring that a specified percentage of the total housing units in a neighborhood or development are affordable.
- B. Develop a master plan for Town-owned properties that considers future development projects or land swaps for affordable housing sites.
- C. Review inclusionary housing programs within the Town boundaries or the region that foster a mix of housing choices and forms.
- D. Support employer assisted housing programs to encourage more employees of various professions (teachers, police officers, firemen) to live within the Town limits or within Beaufort County.
- E. Expand housing programs and other educational workshops to the middle class and workforce housing markets.
- F. Sponsor or co-sponsor workshops to educate the public on the potential impact on their daily quality of life that is directly affected by the supply or lack thereof of workforce housing. Workshops and discussion groups should be considered as a means to brainstorm strategies to address housing issues and should involve all players in the community and throughout the region.
- G. Review the land acquisition program to determine if an affordable housing component would be an appropriate modification.
- H. Encourage redevelopment of individual units to maintain marketability and code compliance, especially in developments that have multiple owners.
- I. Create incentives for redevelopment that offer a planned community approach with goals of diversity in housing cost and transportation modes.
- J. Adopt flexible ordinances for planned unit developments (PUD), cluster homes and other innovations in housing development that meet workforce housing needs.
- K. Amend the regulations to require interconnection between developments, which promotes the establishment of neighborhoods and to provide safe and convenient access to neighborhood level of public facilities, particularly parks and schools.

## 5.4 Barriers to Affordable Housing

- A. Encourage property owners of unsafe or dilapidated structures to rehabilitate and convert the buildings to affordable housing should be researched as a means to provide both redevelopment and provide affordable housing.
- B. Facilitate the construction and redevelopment of housing opportunities through economic incentives, such as grants or other funding sources.
- C. Establish a Redevelopment Agency or other similar agency to administer housing programs and continue research housing options, and serve as an educational resource.
- D. Monitor statutory issues and the implications they have on homeowners. This includes any proposed legislation that addresses taxation, property owner's association fees and taxes and the point of sale, or real estate transfer taxes.
- E. Create development incentive to encourage diverse housing options that may include increased density, reduced parking requirements and increased height standards.

## 6 Community Facilities

*To provide facilities for the residents and visitors of Hilton Head Island which are maintained at the highest levels of service and efficiency consistent with facilities of a world class community.*

### Introduction

One of the most important elements within the planning process as mandated by the State Enabling Legislation is the provision of community facilities. The legislation defines community facilities as major capital improvements, including, but not limited to, transportation, sanitary sewer, solid waste, drainage, potable water, educational, parks and recreational, and health systems and facilities. The provision of these services is directly related to current needs and future demands; therefore this element will address existing needs for services and how those services will be provided to meet future needs.

The nature of community facilities is somewhat different in the Town of Hilton Head Island than in an average municipality. Whereas a town government typically organizes during the early phases of a community's development and adds services and facilities as the community grows, the Town of Hilton Head Island was not organized and incorporated until nearly thirty years after the Island began to develop. At the time of its incorporation, the Town was designated a "limited services government" in recognition that only certain functions such as planning, permitting and engineering would be under the jurisdiction of the Town government. Other traditionally public functions like solid waste collection, water, and sewer services had been provided to many Island communities for years by private and public entities. The incorporated Town government of Hilton Head Island was created to fill gaps in community services and facilities but not to duplicate functions already under the jurisdiction of capable agencies.

Currently both Hilton Head Island and its Town government may be considered to be in transition. Although not a traditional town government, the Town of Hilton Head Island government has grown dramatically since its inception and holds influence over community services and facilities which it has not always held. The Town government can be a leading voice in all major issues concerning the services and facilities available to the general population of Hilton Head Island.

Due to complexity, information on the transportation and recreation networks in the Town is found in the Transportation Element ( Chapter 9 ) and the Recreation Element ( Chapter 10 ) of this Plan. More information on Cultural Resources can be found in Chapter 3 of this Plan.

### 6.1 Build-out and Future Service Needs

As the population of the Island continues to grow, some Island service providers will be faced with increasing demands for services. Regional growth will also impact some of the Town's facilities and services. Currently the number of permanent residents on the Island is estimated to be 40,697 in 2008, based on Town staff estimates. It has also been estimated that the Island will be home to 53,000 people by 2020 (*Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan*, 2006). In addition to the number of permanent residents living on the Island, the Island's visitors produce additional demand on services. According to the Chamber of Commerce's Comprehensive Visitors Summary, the number of *monthly* visitors in 2008 ranged from over 94,000 in December to over 225,000 in July. Having this type of variation in the number of people on the Island creates unique challenges for service providers. Rather than a constant rate of service consumption throughout the year, needs spike dramatically during summer months. Growth and visitation trends are important considerations for the services needed on the Island.

Regional growth also has the potential to impact Island facilities and services, such as the provision of beach access. As the mainland continues to grow, more intense use of the Island's beach parks will most likely occur. More information on population projections can be found in the Population Element (Chapter 4) of this Comprehensive Plan. More information on beach access and beach management, including beach nourishment, can be found in the [Town of Hilton Head Island Beach Management Plan](#), which was adopted as an appendix to this Plan.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

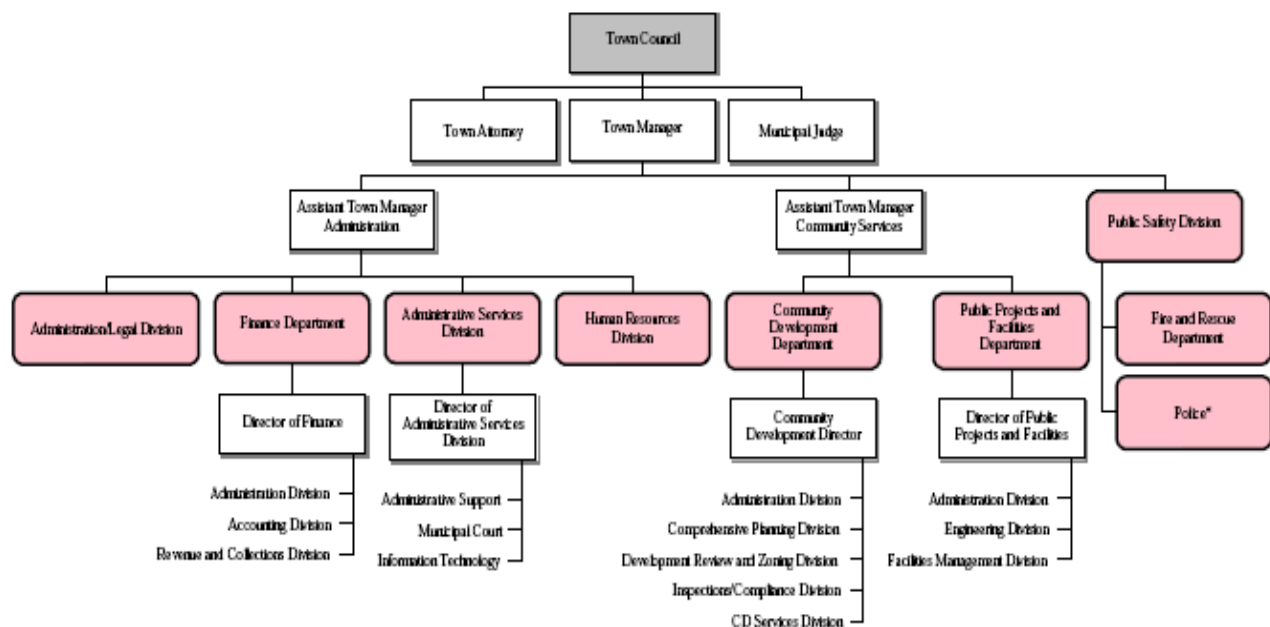
- The Town government should continue to provide creative, innovative and visionary solutions in dealing with the challenges of growth and development, as well as continue to provide a high level of service to the public keeping in mind fiscal responsibility, return on investment and the community's willingness to pay.

## 6.2 Town Government

In 1983, the Town of Hilton Head Island was established by voter approval of a five-member Town Council. Following reapportionment of the Island into five wards, the Town Council was increased to seven members consisting of six Council members and the Mayor. Currently, the Town is divided into six wards. A Council-Manager form of government has been in place since the incorporation of the Town and continues to effectively serve the purposes of Town government. Under the oversight of the Town Manager, the staff is organized to manage the various functions under the Town's jurisdiction.

The Town staff organizational chart is illustrated in Figure 6.1. Please note that the Police Division under Public Safety is indicated differently because these services are contracted with Beaufort County Sheriff's Office.

**Figure 6.1 Town Organizational Chart**



Source: Town of Hilton Head Island

The services provided by the Town are managed by a professional staff under the leadership of the Town Manager. The total number of staff positions among all Town departments is approximately 103, with an additional 148 employees in the Fire and Rescue Department. This staff size represents a considerable increase from the 52 staff positions in 1991 and is indicative of the general expansion of the Town's services and responsibilities.

The services provided by the Town have continued to increase. In 1993 the Town began its Fire and Rescue Department and beginning in the early 1990's the Town began its land acquisition program, which has increased the number of Town-owned properties, facilities and maintenance responsibilities for the Town. In addition, the growth of the Town's Capital Improvement Program to include projects such as beach management, drainage improvements, roadway improvements and park development is symbolic of the expansion in the Town's role in the provision of services on the Island. As the Town continues to evaluate the scope of its government, the funding for new and increased services must also be considered. The State has a limit on the amount of annual tax increases that local governments can make, which makes planning for future service needs even more important.

Generally, State Law allows a governing body to increase its millage for general operating purposes over the rate charged in the preceding tax year only to the extent of the average increase in the Consumer Price Index for the preceding calendar year, plus the percentage increase in population within the taxing jurisdiction. For example, in fiscal year 2010, the Town's allowable population percentage increase is 0.07% and the consumer price index percentage increase is 3.84%, for a combined allowable millage rate increase maximum of 3.9%. Should the provision of services require an increase greater than this amount in one fiscal year, additional funding sources must be allocated to the new service; therefore it is important for the Town to continue to evaluate the scope of its government and plan accordingly for any increases in funding associated with services on the Island.

As the services of the Town have increased, so have facility needs. The Town has conducted a series of space needs studies, which analyzed staffing levels, staff functions and facility needs. As a result of the recommendations from various studies, the Town has made renovations to Town Hall and continues to evaluate viable options to meet existing and future space needs. In addition to these properties, the Town also owns other types of properties that are discussed in more detail in Section 6.5, Town Acquired Property, of this Element and Town parks are discussed in the Recreation Element (Chapter 10).

Table 6.1 is a list of Town-owned facilities and Figure 6.2 shows select Community Facilities on the Island.

**Table 6.1 Town-owned Facilities**

Town-owned Facility	Town-owned Facility	Town-owned Facility
Town Hall Town Hall Library Municipal Court One Town Center Court	Fire and Rescue Training Center - Hiltech Drive	Station 4 400 Squire Pope Road
Facilities Management Gateway Circle	Station 1 70 Cordillo Parkway (Shipyard Plantation)	Station 5 20 Whooping Crane Way (Hilton Head Plantation)
Emergency Communications and Emergency Operations Center 21 Oak Park Drive	Station 2 - 65 Lighthouse Road (Sea Pines Plantation)	Station 6 16 Queens Folly Road Palmetto Dunes
Fire and Rescue Headquarters 40 Summit Drive	Station 3 534 William Hilton Parkway	Station 7 1001 Marshland Road

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Adequate facilities should be provided in order to facilitate the administration of all Town government functions.
- After Town projects are constructed, provide maintenance that preserves or improves upon the original quality of the project.
- As the Town matures, the scope of Town government should continue to be evaluated.
- The state limits expanding services through an increase in taxes.
- Developing other sources of revenue is critical to providing any new or expanded services.

## 6.3 Transportation Network

### Roadways

Although, currently, a land-based transportation as well as water-based transportation opportunities are available on and to the Island, the most extensively used transportation network is the ground-based roadway system. According to the Town's Geographic Information System, the total length of roadway miles on the Island is approximately 385. The Town owns and maintains approximately 8.5 miles of that total or 2%. The County owns 21 miles of roadway and the State owns approximately 73 miles of roadway. The largest roadway system is found within the PUDs and they are privately owned and maintained by their residents. Private roads total 282 miles. Currently the Town's policy is to transfer all Town-owned roads to the County for ownership and maintenance. While this policy is in place, the County's ability to accept new roads is limited due to funding. On selected roads the Town retains some road maintenance responsibilities, which include landscape, litter control and beautification projects. In addition to these responsibilities, the Facilities Management Division also responds to routine maintenance requests on both County and State roads if needed. Figure 6.3 shows all Town-owned roads. More details about the transportation network, including facilities and services, are discussed in the Transportation Element (Chapter 9).

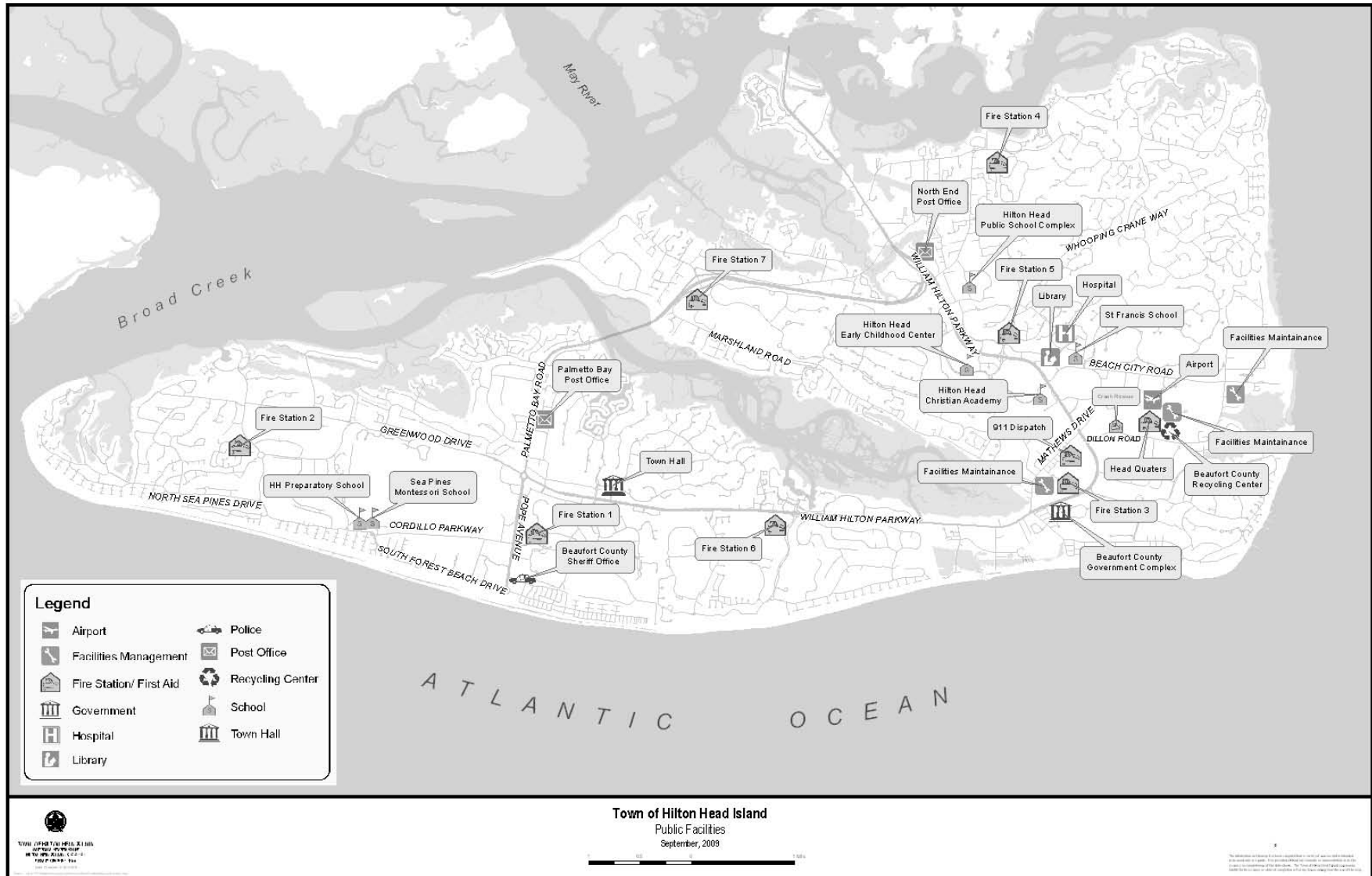
### Pathways

The Town of Hilton Head Island provides nearly 60 miles of public pathways on which pedestrians and cyclists may enjoy the diverse destinations and activities provided by the Island. There are also additional projects planned for the future. Public pathways are maintained by the Facilities Management Division of the Town. In addition to these pathways, there is an estimated 50 miles of pathways and shared roadways within the private developments. Together both the public and private pathway networks comprise a comprehensive system of multi-use pathways on the Island.

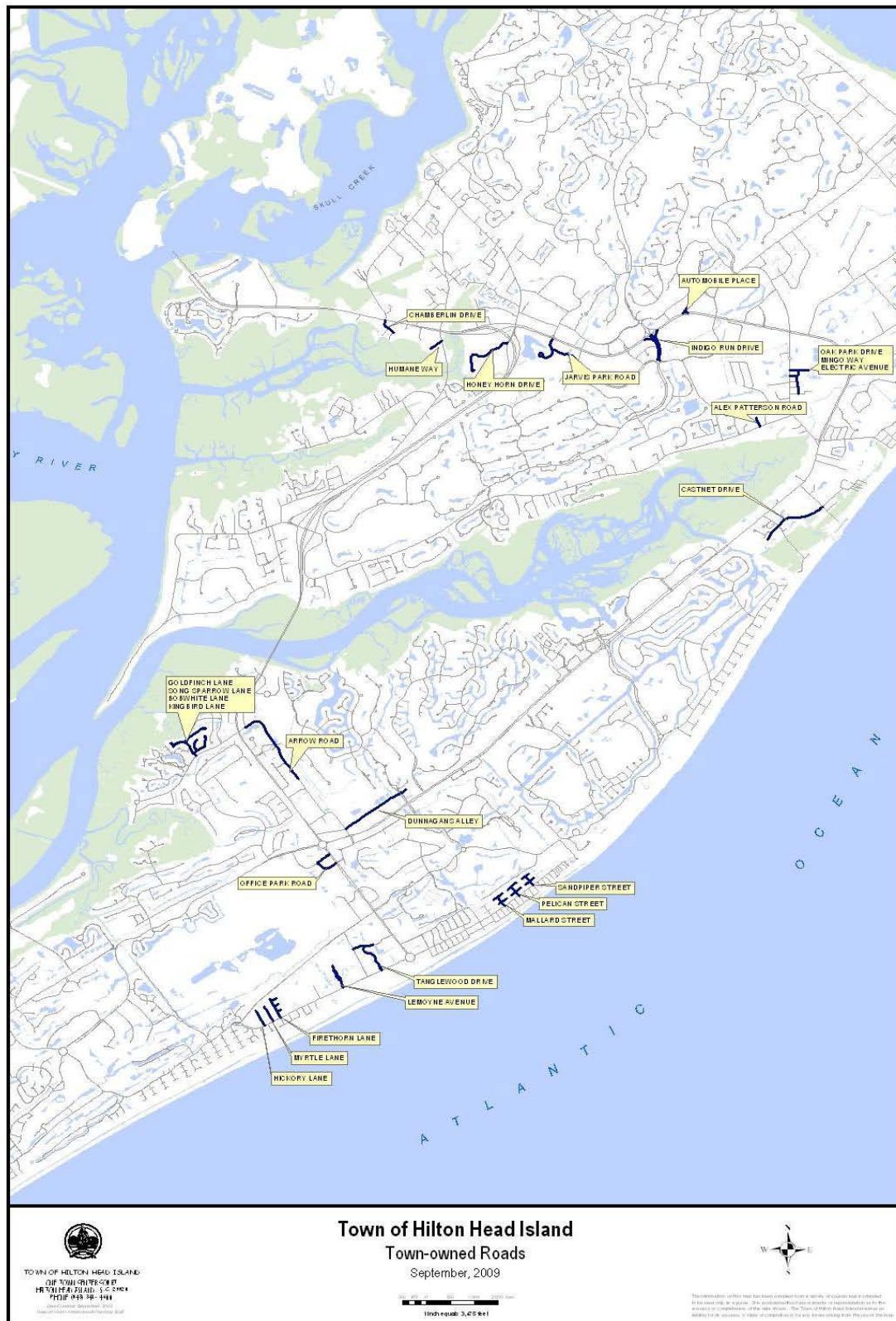
Construction of the Town's first pathway project was completed in 1989. It was the first phase in a pathway route planned to extend from Sea Pines Circle to Palmetto Dunes along William Hilton Parkway. The Town also resurfaced Burkes Beach Road and provided a bike lane along the edge of the roadway leading to the beach. Originally, the intention for the pathway system was to build a continuous pathway along William Hilton Parkway to Hilton Head Island's school campus, which quickly expanded to include interconnecting pathways along secondary roads and to parks. Today, the Town's primary goals for the multi-use pathway network are to guide the development and maintenance of a pathway transportation system that provides access and mobility throughout the Town. More information on the Town's multi-purpose pathway network can be found in the Transportation Element (Chapter 9). Figure 6.4 shows the Island's existing and proposed pathways.



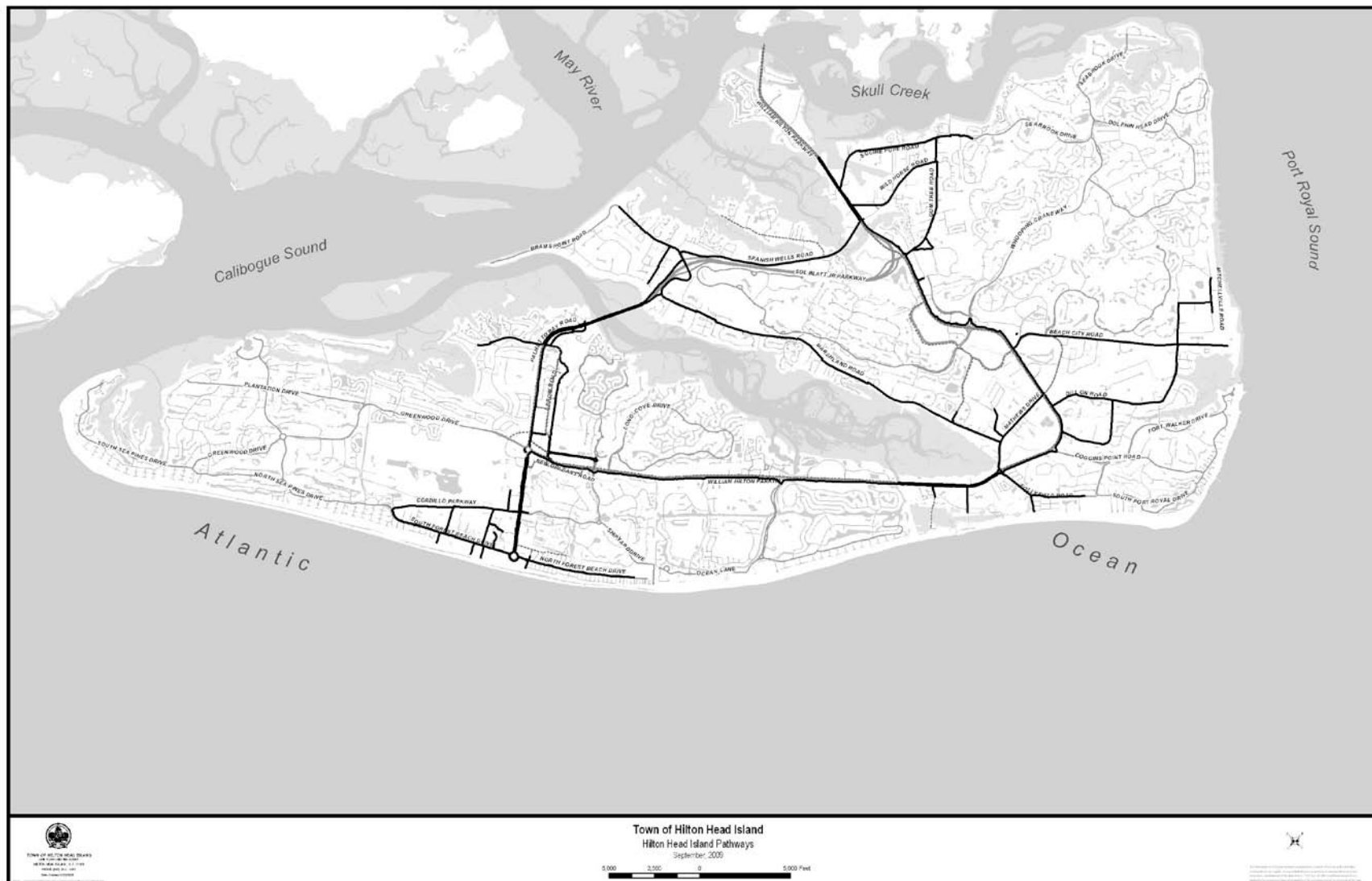
Figure 6.2 Community Facilities



**Figure 6.3 Town-owned Roads**



### Figure 6.4 Pathways



## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan Zoning

- The Town needs a comprehensive transportation network composed of roads, pathways, water and air transportation opportunities that are adequately maintained that meet current standards.
- The Town should coordinate with the State and County to provide for a safe, efficient and well maintained regional transportation network.
- The bridge and causeway are critical public facilities that provide a lifeline for residents and visitors as well as the only ground transportation link for emergency evacuations. Protection of these critical facilities should be a priority.
- While the Island currently has an extensive pathway network, opportunities to improve pathway connections between destinations that provide additional recreational opportunities and promote alternative means of transportation on the Island should be considered.
- The Island's pathway network could be enhanced by providing a link to mainland pathway facilities.

### 6.4 Town Acquired Property

The Town has an aggressive land acquisition program funded through five Land Acquisition Referendums and other sources, such as the Real Estate Transfer Fees, Hospitality Taxes, Property Taxes and Stormwater Fees. Land Acquisition Referendum results are shown in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2 General Obligation Bonds Resulting from Land Acquisition Referendums**

YEAR	AMOUNT
1998	\$10 Million
1999	\$6 Million
2001	\$20 Million
2004	\$15 Million
2007	\$17 Million

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Staff

Depending on the funding source, additional purchase requirements can apply. For example, purchases made with the Real Estate Transfer Fee must comply with the Real Estate Transfer Fee Ordinance. This ordinance specifies that purchases must be for one of the following reasons:

- To acquire land while it is still available to be held in perpetuity as wildlife preserves or believed to be needed by the public in the future for active and passive recreational uses and scenic easements and/or
- To acquire a ready developed land or development rights in order to convert its use to a public use, to restore the property to open space, or to redefine the property in accordance with the comprehensive plan and dispose of it.

Currently, on the Island, the Town has purchased over 133 parcels, totaling over 1,177 acres at a cost of over \$151.6 Million. In order to determine what purchases to make, Town Council uses the *Town of Hilton Head Island Land Acquisition Manual*, which was adopted in 2005 and contains policies and procedures, including purchase criteria, for the Land Acquisition Program.

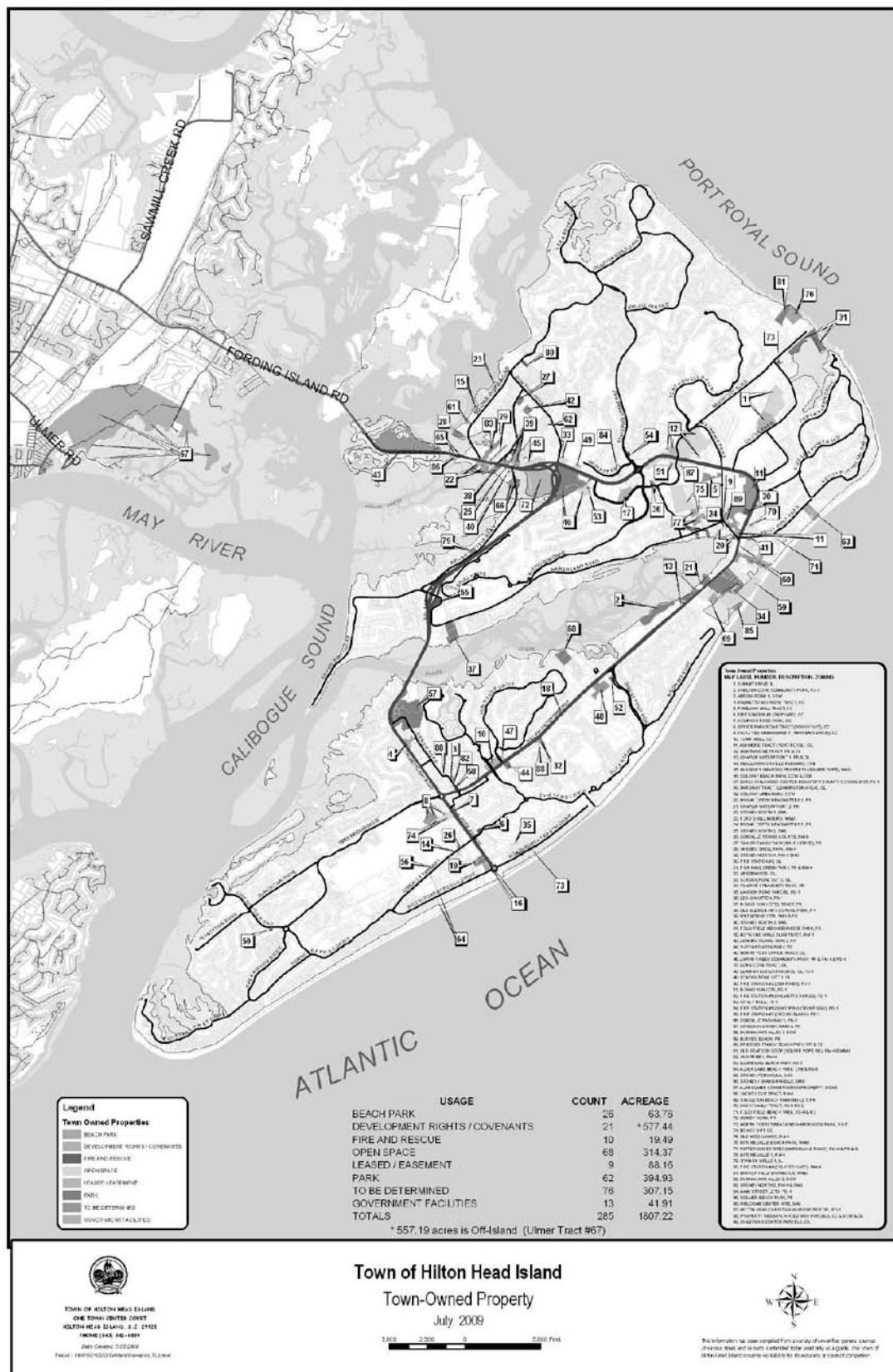
Proof of the program's success is evident in its results. As of the middle of 2008, the Land Acquisition Program has resulted in the elimination of over 4.37 Million potential square feet of commercial development, the elimination of 1,365 potential motel rooms and the elimination of 4,467 residential or timeshare units. This has resulted in improved traffic conditions on the Island, helping to reduce the need for additional infrastructure, such as road widening. Other accomplishments include the addition of recreational facilities, beach access locations, the protection of open space, and contributions toward redevelopment initiatives. Figure 6.5, shows all Town-owned properties and their current use. Once purchased by the Town, properties are maintained by the Facilities Management Division. A limited number of properties are maintained by the County.

## **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Funding of the Town's land acquisition programs should be continued to further protect natural resources as well as to further implement goals of the program.
- As the Town matures and the need for redevelopment increases, the evaluation of policies related to land acquisition can help to better address the changing needs of the community.
- As the number of Town-owned properties continues to increase careful consideration of future utility is important to long range planning efforts.
- Development and land use changes adjacent to Town properties should be monitored.



Figure 6.5 Town-owned Property





## 6.5 Utilities

### **Water and Wastewater Treatment Systems**

Drinking water supply, wastewater treatment, and reclaimed (or recycled) water services on Hilton Head Island are provided by three Public Service Districts (PSDs): Hilton Head Public Service District (HHPSD), Broad Creek Public Service District (BCSD) and South Island Public Service District (SIPSD). In some cases individually owned wells are still being used; however a Town Ordinance prohibits further permitting of new wells on the Island. The Districts' service areas are shown in Figure 6.6.

The current number of PSDs reflects the consolidation of the Island's utility companies from 10 in 1994. All three PSDs on Hilton Head Island are separate governmental entities created through legislation passed by the South Carolina General Assembly. Each PSD is governed by its own Commission. The HHPSD Commission is elected by registered voters within its service area. The Commissioners of the BCPSD and SIPSD are appointed by the Governor of South Carolina. BCPSD holds a vote of its customers to recommend Commissioner appointments to the Governor.

The water distribution systems of all three PSDs on the Island meet the requirements for fire protection as regulated by the State of South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Water and sewer services are also adequate to accommodate future service needs.

#### **Hilton Head Public Service District (HHPSD)**

HHPSD serves a district extending from the northern end of the Island southward to Broad Creek and ending south of US 278 at Singleton Beach Road; the service area includes Hilton Head Plantation, Indigo Run, Palmetto Hall and Port Royal. Water sources for HHPSD which are supplied by seven wells in the Upper Floridan Aquifer, a Reverse Osmosis Drinking Water Treatment Facility that utilizes three wells in the Middle Floridan Aquifer, and a pipeline under the Intracoastal Waterway that brings Savannah River surface water, which is purchased wholesale by HHPSD and BCPSD from Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority (BJSWA). HHPSD treats approximately 3 million gallons a day (MGD) of wastewater in its state-of-the-art 6.4MGD Reclaimed Water Plant at 21 Oak Marsh Drive, off Mathews Drive. This plant meets the needs anticipated by future growth and redevelopment.

#### **Broad Creek Public Service District (BCPSD)**

BCPSD serves a small area in the south-central portion of Hilton Head Island bounded by Broad Creek on the north and the Atlantic Ocean on the south including the Palmetto Dunes Resort, Shelter Cove, Leamington and Yacht Cove areas. BCPSD customers are served by three wells to the Upper Floridan Aquifer, which currently pump an average of 1.75 MGD, with additional water supply from the Savannah River through the cooperative agreement with HHPSD and BJWSA with the potential for up to 2 MGD.

BCPSD operates one wastewater treatment facility located along Marina Side Drive. The facility currently treats 1.2 MGD and is permitted for 2 MGD. Approximately 1 MGD of reclaimed water is used to water the three golf courses in Palmetto Dunes. During peak usage, there are eight back-up wells within Palmetto Dunes. BCPSD is working with customers to reduce irrigation intensity and frequency, which has been successful in reducing water use. BCPSD service district is primarily built out and all customers in the district are connected to sewer. Future planning for BCPSD is related to water source diversification, water conservation and emergency planning. If needed, BCPSD sewer system can be connected to HHPSD's system at a lift station located in the Chaplin area. This is one example of the cooperative planning being accomplished by Island PSDs.

**South Island Public Service District (SIPSD)**

SIPSD serves the south end of the Island from Broad Creek to the Atlantic Ocean and includes Wexford, Long Cove Club, Shipyard and Sea Pines. The water infrastructure includes seventeen wells tapped into the Upper Floridan Aquifer and a reverse osmosis water treatment plant. The reverse osmosis water treatment plant uses Cretaceous Aquifer water for its feed water. The PSD averages approximately 6.0 MGD of potable water demand, which includes 4.465 MGD from the Upper Floridan Aquifer with the reverse osmosis water treatment plant providing the balance. SIPSD is currently conducting a study of the Upper Floridan Aquifer to evaluate the sustainable yield from this source and working in conjunction with other Island PSDs to address long range water planning issues.

SIPSD operates three wastewater treatment plants. The largest, located off of Lawton Road near the Sea Pines Forest Preserve, has an average flow rate of 3.4 MGD and is capable of treating 5.0 MGD. There are two smaller plants located in Wexford and Long Cove Club that average flows of 0.095 MGD and 0.081 MGD respectively. This service area is primarily built out and major increases in usage are not anticipated. There are a few areas in this service district that, although sewer is available, have not chosen to connect. They are Calibogue Cay, Greenwood Court and a small area along Plantation Drive. Table 6.3 shows a summary of water and wastewater use and disposal.

**Table 6.3: 2008 Water and Wastewater Use and Disposal \***

	HHPSD	BCPSD	SIPSD
<b>Water Supply</b>			
Average Daily Demand	6.5 MGD	1.95 MGD	5.938 MGD
Peak Daily Demand	10.7 MGD	3.29 MGD	9.676 MGD
Potential Demand	12 MGD	4.86 MGD	16.249 MGD for the well system
# of customers	17,354	5,000	24,093
<b>Wastewater</b>			
Average Daily Flow	2.4 MGD	1.05 MGD	3.282 MGD
Peak Daily Flow	2.9 MGD	1.87 MGD	4.630 MGD
Max Capacity	6.4 MGD	2.08 MGD	5.000 MGD
# of customers	14,880	5,000	24,008
<b>How Wastewater is Discharged</b>			
MGY to Golf Courses	508.03 MGY	365 MGY	435.73 MGY
MGY to Wetlands	323.8 MGY	0 MGY	441.09 MGY
Total MGY	831.9 MGY	365 MGY	876.82 MGY
<b>Wetlands Nourishment</b>			
Number of Acres	199 acres	0	104 acres
* It is important to note that variations do occur due to rainfall events. MGY = Million Gallons per Year			

Source: Hilton Head Island Public Service Districts

### **Salt Water Intrusion**

Due to saltwater intrusion into the Upper Floridan Aquifer the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) limited the amount of water that can be drawn from the Upper Floridan Aquifer within a four-county zone in South Carolina, which includes Beaufort County and thereby all of Hilton Head Island. Multiple federal, state and local studies have shown that the saltwater intrusion has been caused by the over pumping of the Upper Floridan Aquifer in the Savannah, Ga., region. This over pumping is pulling saltwater from the Port Royal Sound into the freshwater underground aquifer. South Carolina and Georgia are currently working together to address this problem.

The Island's three PSDs have been combating the effects of the intrusion since the late 1990's. HHPSD and BCPSD each entered into agreements with B JWSA to supply water from the Savannah River. In 1999, a pipeline was constructed that supplies treated Savannah River surface water to the Island. HHPSD as well as SIPSD have built Reverse Osmosis drinking water treatment plants to provide for additional water source diversification.

All three Island PSDs continue to conduct future water supply planning in order to ensure a long-term and high-quality source of drinking water for the island in the face of continued saltwater intrusion.

### **Disposal of Wastewater**

The manner in which wastewater is recycled or disposed of is an important consideration for the Island, especially for water conservation efforts. Currently all three PSDs have golf course watering programs. Reclaimed Water provides highly-treated reclaimed water to over 14 golf courses on the Island. Broad Creek PSD recycles all of its wastewater for golf course purposes. The remainder of reclaimed water at HHPSD and SIPSD is used for the recharge of wetlands. Hilton Head Plantation, Palmetto Hall, Boggy Gut and White Ibis wetlands all receive reclaimed water. The Boggy Gut project was started in 1983 by SIPSD as a 3 year pilot study and is one of the oldest natural wetland restoration projects in the southeastern United States. It has also been used as a model for other wetland disposal projects.

### **Sewer and Water Connection Needs**

There are a number of areas within the Island that do not currently have access to the public sewer system or have sewer available and choose not to connect. These areas are shown on Figure 6.6, Island Areas not Connected to Sewer. Home and business owners in these areas without sewer available are dependent upon individual, on-site sewage disposal systems (septic tanks). This can be costly for property owners to provide sewage disposal, partly due to the high groundwater table and poor soil conditions in many of these areas. It can also lead to environmental and health concerns as many older systems are subject to failure, especially when improperly maintained.

In 2004 HHPSD embarked upon an effort to provide sewer access and connection throughout its entire service area, aided in part by a Sewer Master Plan that was jointly funded by the Town. As a result of this effort, approximately 8% of Hilton Head PSD customers remained unconnected to the sewer system in 2009, as opposed to 20% unconnected at the start of the sewer access effort in 2004.

The 8% of customers who remained unconnected as of 2009 include approximately 1,000 customers that lack access, and approximately 120 customers that have sewer available but choose to remain unconnected. In 2009, HHPSD began planning a series of projects to provide sewer access for the remaining 8% of its customers currently lacking access to the sewer system. The effort involves identification of funding sources, infrastructure needs, and easement acquisition to complete the sewer access effort.

It is estimated that 200 to 400 of the approximately 1,000 customers lacking sewer access may be low-to-moderate-income property owners. A financial assistance program is in place to assist these owners. Project SAFE (Sewer Access for Everyone) is a fund of the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry. Hilton Head PSD customers fund Project SAFE via the utility bill round-up program, Bucks for a Better Island. Bucks for a Better Island annually raises nearly \$40,000 to help fund Project SAFE. In 2009 alone, Project SAFE granted more than \$100,000 to qualified property owners to cover all or a portion of their sewer connection costs. The fund uses the Beaufort County Median Family Income, as established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, to determine levels of grant awards. In order to further reduce costs the Town has assisted HHPSD by allowing the location sewer infrastructure on Town property, such as the regional lift station located in the Chaplin area. By locating these facilities on Town-owned property, land costs were reduced resulting in lower fees for connection to sewer.

### **Stormwater**

As stated previously, the modern era of development began almost thirty years prior to the incorporation of the Town. During this time, significant stormwater infrastructure was installed that manipulated the natural watersheds and their boundaries. The Town inherited the majority of its stormwater infrastructure from these past developers. In some cases, similar work today would be difficult to permit due to the potential environmental impacts; however, some decisions of early developers have produced more favorable results. One of the most important decisions was to not install any direct stormwater outfalls onto the Island's beach. Another success has been the interconnected system of lagoons in some developments. These have proven successful in relationship to both water quality and water quantity.

In 1995, an Island-wide Drainage Study was completed to inventory and analyze the Island's stormwater system in order to determine what improvements were needed to prevent or minimize upland flooding due to the lack of capacity to move water in the more lowland areas. This plan identified 16 public projects with a total cost of approximately \$20 Million, along with other private improvements of approximately \$3 Million.

In 1996, drainage was added to the Town's Capital Improvements Program, which included a prioritized project listing with proposed funding sources. The design and construction of Jarvis Lake, Jarvis Creek Pump Station, and Jarvis Creek Park is one nationally recognized effort to save federal wetlands while still achieving stormwater control.

To date, all but 2 of the 16 projects have been completed at a cost of approximately \$27 Million. With these projects completed, the Town's role in stormwater has begun to transition from project implementation to maintenance and regulatory compliance efforts. The Town has secured agreements to maintain and improve the stormwater infrastructure in Shipyard, Hilton Head Plantation, Port Royal Indigo Run and Sea Pines Palmetto Hall, and Wexford Plantations. This additional responsibility comes with an associated cost and as a result, has necessitated an increase of our Stormwater Utility Fees. Stormwater Utility Fees are collected by the County through both residential and commercial property taxes at a rate based on the amount of impervious area on the property. Once collected, the County redistributes the fees to participating municipalities. Hilton Head Island recently raised its fee from \$50.76 to \$83.23 primarily due to the expansion of the Town's responsibilities associated with the agreements described above.

**Figure 6.6 Island Areas not Connected to Sewer**



### **Electricity**

The Island's electricity services are provided by Palmetto Electric Cooperative (PEC), which was formed in 1940 and serves Hampton, Colleton, Jasper and Beaufort Counties. In 1949, PEC began buying electricity generated by Santee Cooper. In 2002, PEC secured its partnership with Touchstone Energy, which is a network of more than 600 cooperatives in 44 states. This has helped to diversify the sources of power for Island residents. Customers are also owners in the company. The customers of PEC elect other members as its governing body, which has helped to guide community involvement in decision making and strategic planning. PEC aggressively promotes energy conservation through providing information and programs to its customers.

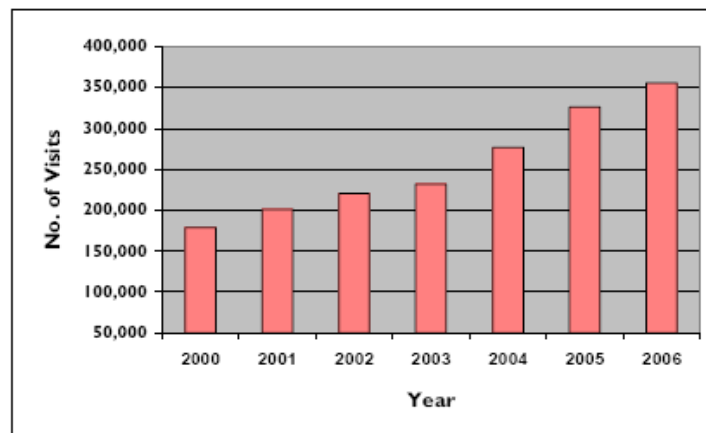
In response to community concerns with the visual quality of the built environment and storm event mitigation, the Town and PEC jointly developed a program to bury 108.63 miles of overhead power lines on the Island. Approximately 35% of the work is now complete. This program is funded by rate payers through the Hilton Head Island Franchise Fee which was adopted by the Town on November of 2004. The benefits are far more reaching than the obvious beautification to the community. The underground power system allows the Island to better withstand lightning, tropical storms and low level hurricanes. Figure 6.7 shows power line burial projects that have been completed, are ongoing or are planned for the future. It is anticipated that the projects will be complete by 2019; however this date can be extended if necessary to accomplish program goals.

### **Solid Waste Collection and Disposal**

Solid waste collection and disposal services within the Town are available from private waste haulers as well as Beaufort County. Residential customers have the option of contracting with private waste haulers for curbside pick-up or dropping off solid waste at the County Convenience and Recycling Center located on the Island. Residents' charges for solid waste disposal services are included in their property taxes on homes and cars. Commercial customers must contract with private haulers.

In 2000 the Town partnered with Beaufort County to develop a consolidated waste and recycling center on the Island at the Town-owned property located off Dillon Road. This center replaced two smaller locations on the Island. The Convenience Center accepts recyclables, bagged household garbage, yard waste and non-compactable items. According to the County, the number of vehicles visiting the convenience center on the Island has increased from about 175,000 in 2000 to over 350,000 vehicles 2006; a 50% increase in traffic. Figure 6.8 shows the number of trips to the Hilton Head Island's convenience center.

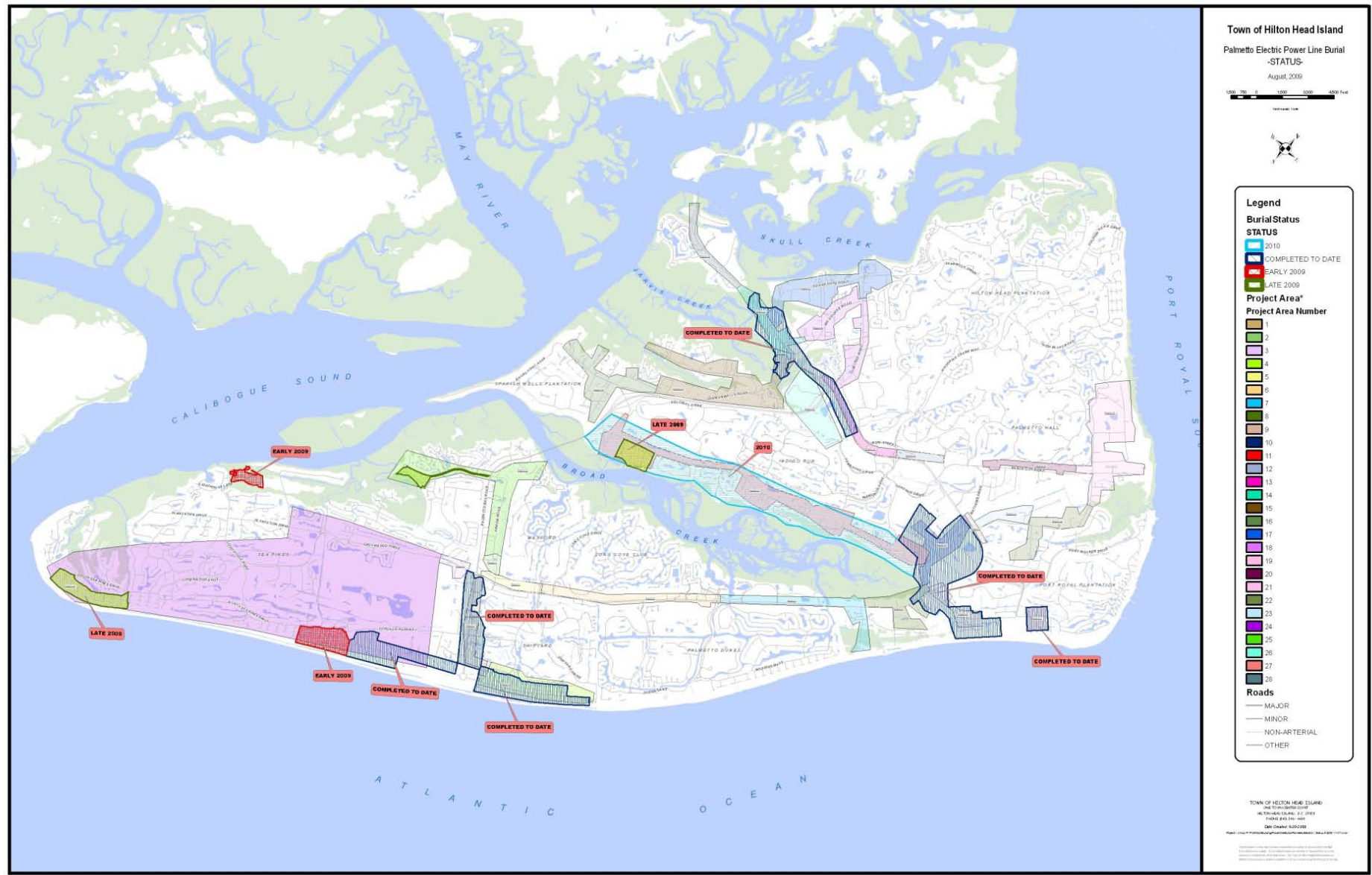
**Figure 6.8 Hilton Head Island Convenience Center Traffic Volumes**



Source: Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan: Community Facilities Element, 2007



### Figure 6.7 Power Line Burial Projects



Once solid waste and recyclables are dropped off, full containers are hauled to Hickory Hill Landfill, located in Jasper County. Recyclables are sorted and municipal solid waste is placed in the landfill. Hickory Hill Landfill is owned by Waste Management, a private company, and has an estimated lifetime of 20 years. (*Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan: Community Facilities Element, 2007*). The County has a contract with the Hickory Hills Materials Recovery Facility, also owned by Waste Management Inc., to process and market recyclables collected at the County's twelve convenience centers.

An evaluation of the County's solid waste needs was conducted by Beaufort County in 2005, which resulted in a recommendation for the County to build a solid waste transfer station. A transfer station is a facility where solid waste can be sorted, consolidated and distributed to other landfills in addition to Hickory Hill Landfill. This would result in the County having alternative facilities for solid waste disposal and would potentially help reduce customer costs. This evaluation also resulted in the identification of six landfill facilities within a 175 mile radius as potential Beaufort County disposal sites.

Recycling is one way to reduce the amount of solid waste generated by the Island's residents and visitors. The Town has established a beach and park recycling pilot program at Islander's and Coligny Beach Parks, as well as Chaplin Park to serve the highest concentration of Island residents. A solar powered trash receptacle with a recycling kiosk will also be installed in Coligny Beach Park. Although recycling has become a high priority for the Town, the unique nature of the Island's development patterns, with gated communities that have aesthetic restrictive covenants, has resulted in unique problems associated with recycling collection at individual addresses. The Island's Property Owners Associations are a key to this and to any recycling initiative in the PUD areas. The nature of the Island as a destination for vacation tourism poses additional challenges to effective recycling. Recycling alternatives that improve recycling awareness and accessibility for Island residents and visitors continue to be evaluated.

Hazardous waste disposal is also accommodated on the Island. The Household Hazardous Waste Round Up has been held annually and sometimes twice a year by the Town. Each event has recovered about 55,000 lbs of waste that would have been sent to area landfills or improperly disposed of in sewer and storm drains. 95% of all hazards collected are recycled or reclaimed leaving only a small quantity of hazards to be permanently stored. Almost 400,000 pounds of material has been collected since the beginning of the program.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Adequate water service should be provided for both domestic use and fire and safety purposes.
- Adequate sewer service should be provided Island-wide to improve public health, safety and welfare, reduce detrimental impacts on the Island's environment and accommodate growth and redevelopment.
- Saltwater intrusion increases the need to evaluate viable water source solutions to ensure that the Town will have an adequate water supply in the future.
- The Town should continue to work with Island PSDs to encourage water conservation.
- In order to maintain water quality, reduce negative impacts on natural systems and provide for improved stormwater conditions on the Island, the Town should continue improving stormwater infrastructure and promoting the use of best management practices.
- By encouraging recycling the Town can help reduce solid waste and pollution, as well as save natural resources and energy.
- The Town should continue to evaluate cost effective and efficient solid waste disposal and recycling options to ensure that there are adequate facilities available for these purposes.
- The Town should help educate Island residents and visitors about recycling options.
- Continued power line burial is needed to improve aesthetics and protect the Island from interruptions in electrical service, especially during significant weather events.
- Cooperative use of utility easements, primarily Santee Cooper's power line easement, should be considered.

- Utilization of Town Convenience Center has experienced significant increases, ultimately capacity and location should be evaluated to meet future needs.
- Town Hazardous Waste Round Ups should be continued.

## 6.6 Public Safety

### **Law Enforcement Services**

Police services for the Town of Hilton Head Island are provided by the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office (BCSO). The Sheriff's Office operates a substation on Hilton Head Island and has an agreement with the Town of Hilton Head Island to provide policing services for the Town.

The substation for the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office is currently rented space located at 7 Lagoon Road near Coligny Plaza on the south end of the Island. In 2000, the Town studied several options for the provision of police services to continue from Beaufort County or some form of Town controlled administration. The study was initiated due to a perception that Beaufort County Sheriff's Department may have failed to meet its contractual level of service. The study ultimately recommended that the Town and County renegotiate a contract to require additional direct reporting and detailed level of service expectations. Recently, the Town and Beaufort County are considering the development of a new Law Enforcement Center that would replace the existing office location on the Island and provide a holding facility. The current holding facility is located in the City of Beaufort. As opportunities arise, the Town continues to evaluate potential scenarios with the BCSO.

Currently 60 to 64 deputies operate out of the Hilton Head Island Substation to serve the Island. Additional deputies are employed on the Island during special events such as the Heritage PGA Golf Tournament. With consideration for 10 officers per shift, the coverage area per officer is approximately 4.5 square miles. It is difficult to accurately state the ratio of police officers to population on Island due to visitor population fluctuation. A typical shift assigns approximately one on-duty officer per 4,000 permanent residents.

Another aspect of the Island's policing that is unique is private security forces which operate in each of the PUD communities. Over 70% of the Island is policed by private security. There is a strong cooperation with BCSO and the private policing services for those communities. Pursuant to State Law, all criminal cases must be turned over to BCSO. Although these private security forces do reduce demand on the Sheriff's Office, additional deputies are often needed to respond to criminal cases within the PUDs.

### **Fire and Rescue and Emergency Management**

Fire, Rescue, Emergency Medical and Emergency Management services for the Town of Hilton Head Island are provided by the Town's Fire & Rescue Department (HHIFR) which began in 1993 as a consolidation of the former Sea Pines Forest Beach Fire Department, the Hilton Head Island Fire District, and the Hilton Head Island Rescue Squad. In 1999, the Emergency Management Division was added. HHIFR now operates seven staffed fire stations, an Emergency Communications Center, an Emergency Operations Center, a Headquarters/ Maintenance facility and a new Training facility. In 2008, 6,083 calls for service were received, with the majority of requests being related to emergency medical needs.

The Department maintains the [\*Town of Hilton Head Island Fire and Rescue Master Plan\*](#), an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan, which establishes management and operational goals for a ten year period. The last plan was developed in 1999, received an interim update in 2004, and is presently undergoing a full revision. The Town also has a Comprehensive Emergency Management Program (CEMP) that takes an all hazard approach to emergencies and is composed of numerous documents. These include the [\*CEMP Overview\*](#) (adopted 2009), the [\*Continuity of Operations Plan\*](#) (adopted 2009) and the [\*Emergency Operations Plan\*](#) (adopted 1999, updated 2008, presently undergoing a full revision).

In addition, the local portion of the [\*Beaufort County Hazard Mitigation Plan\*](#) (adopted 2004) and the [\*Town of Hilton Head Island Recovery Plan\*](#) (adopted 2003) are presently undergoing full revisions. These two documents, while part of the CEMP, are developed by other organizations with significant support and input being provided by HHIFR.

When developing these plans, consideration is given to the policies contained in the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Due to the technical nature of the plans listed above, they are included in this plan by reference and should be referred to for information on fire and rescue as well as emergency management service needs on the Island.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- In order to ensure that the Town has adequate fire and rescue as well as emergency management services, *Town of Hilton Head Island Fire and Rescue Master Plan* and other emergency management plans should be implemented, keeping in mind fiscal responsibility.
- The cost effectiveness and level of service provisions for law enforcement services and facilities should be monitored.

## 6.7 Communications

Residential and commercial communication services are provided by multiple source providers on the Island. Examples of these services include phone, cellular phone, internet, wireless internet and television services. The economic and redevelopment opportunities that may result from technology infrastructure improvements are also important considerations for the Town. The Town should advance communication capacity to support improved operations and enhance economic development potential. Encouragement should be given to upgrading electronic telecommunication capability on the Island to facilitate development of the telecommuting market segment. Far too many wireless “cold” spots exist and third generation (3G) capability on Island is limited and spotty. This is discussed in more detail in the Economic Element Development Element (Chapter 7).

At no time are communications services more critical than during an emergency; to facilitate effective communication with Island residents and visitors during such a time, a Public Information Officer (PIO) is provided by the Town to implement the Town's *Emergency Operations Plan*. In the case of an emergency, the PIO will work with Town officials and Beaufort County to ensure accurate, consistent and non-contradictory information is provided to the citizens and visitors in a timely manner. Press releases will be regularly issued during emergencies, and the Town will supplement media coverage by providing crisis communications to residents and visitors on the Town's website ([www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov](http://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov)), Twitter account ([www.twitter.com/hhiemergency](http://www.twitter.com/hhiemergency)), and recorded telephone hot line (800.963.5023). Emergency information will be provided throughout the preparedness, response and recovery phases of an emergency.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- As technology improves, it is important for the Town to implement improvements that will help to enhance the services provided to Island residents and visitors.
- The Town should continue to monitor available technologies for improvements to the Town's communications system for emergency management purposes as well as economic development incentives.



## 6.8 Health Care Services

### **Primary Healthcare**

Hilton Head Hospital (HHH) is a privately owned 93-bed acute care hospital located at 25 Hospital Center Boulevard. Opened in 1974, HHH serves Hilton Head Island, Bluffton, Okatie and surrounding counties through its team of over 600 employees, 100 physicians and 200 volunteers. The hospital provides a continuum of services through its centers and programs, including cardiovascular care, open heart surgery, breast health center, obstetrics/gynecology, gastroenterology, surgical services and physical rehabilitation and wellness. The hospital's cancer care program is affiliated with the Medical University of South Carolina Hollings Cancer Center.

Hilton Head Regional Primary and Urgent Care Centers offer family practice and internal medicine physicians providing flexible office hours to meet the health care needs of family's at convenient locations throughout the Hilton Head Island and Bluffton areas. Hilton Head Hospital is accredited by The Joint Commission, the nation's oldest and largest hospital accreditation agency.

Island residents and visitors have access to a large regional healthcare system with locations in Beaufort, Savannah and Charleston.

### **Public Health Facilities**

The Lowcountry Health District of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control provides public health services through local health departments in Beaufort County as well as Jasper, Hampton and Colleton Counties. Health services offered through the Beaufort County Health Department include Child Health, Children's Rehabilitative Services, Maternal Health, WIC, STD Control, Tuberculosis Control, General Clinical Services, Health Promotion, Home Health Services, Long Term Care Services, Vital Records and Environmental Health including food protection, general sanitation and vector control (insects). The Bluffton Health Center is the nearest branch of the Lowcountry Health District to the Town of Hilton Head Island.

In addition to the Beaufort County Health Department, health services are available to Hilton Head Island residents from Beaufort-Jasper Comprehensive Health Services, Inc (B-JCHS), and the Volunteers in Medicine Clinic.

Since 1970, B-JCHS has existed as a community development corporation to deliver comprehensive health services to residents of the socially and economically deprived areas of Beaufort and Jasper Counties. Services offered include general family practice, pediatrics, internal medicine, OB/GYN, dental care, ophthalmology, home health nursing, medical social work, nutritional counseling, pharmacy services, radiology, ultrasound, WIC, supplemental food program, mental health linkage, migrant health services, and others. In addition to Medicaid, Medicare and insurance acceptance, B-JCHS accepts payment from patients on a sliding scale for medical and dental charges based on family size and income. Currently, B-JCHS serves residents of Hilton Head Island by means of a transportation service that is available to transport patients to the main B-JCHS Health Center in Chelsea.

The Volunteers in Medicine Clinic (VIM) is located at 15 Northridge Drive on Hilton Head Island. In 1994 the Town leased property to VIM, which was later dedicated to the Center. The Clinic's personnel consist of full-time paid employees and nearly 450 lay and professional volunteers. These doctors, dentists, nurses and other specialists provide routine medical services including vaccinations, physical examinations, general medicine, dermatology, postnatal and well baby care, cardiology, pediatric care, eye and ear services, dental care, pharmacy, chiropractic, gynecology and mental health services. Care is provided at no cost to those eligible for the Clinic's services. Eligibility is based on requirements that a patient live or work on Hilton Head or Daufuskie Island, that the patient's income is limited to 200 percent of the poverty level based on federal guidelines or less, and that the patient is either not insured, under-insured, or on Medicaid. VIM estimates that there are 30,000 patient visits per year, with approximately 75% of clinic patients living on Hilton Head Island.

### **Cemeteries**

There are a total of 16 cemeteries located on the Island, the majority of these are also historical sites. Cemetery ownership and maintenance responsibilities vary depending on the individual circumstances. The cemeteries located within the PUDs are typically owned by the property owners association. In some cases maintenance is provided by the PUD; in other cases affiliated churches provide maintenance. The cemeteries located outside of PUDs are typically owned and maintained by churches or other non-profit agencies. More information on cemeteries can be found in the Cultural Resources Element (Chapter 3) of this Plan.

## **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The Town has a higher percentage of older adults than an average community. ( See Population Element). This results in a higher demand for medical care including emergency services.
- Consideration for evacuation needs in relationship to Island medical facilities should be considered.
- Maintaining a comprehensive and viable community for medical care is integral to attracting additional retirees and permanent residents to the Island.
- The Town's large service industry employment, which tends to have lower wages, can increase the number of residents without financial resources for health care services.
- Facilities are necessary to provide a final resting place for the deceased. The Town should cooperate with the County and other appropriate organizations to meet the continuing need for final resting places.

## **6.9 Educational Facilities**

### **Daycare**

The South Carolina Department of Social Services – Division of Child Day Care Licensing and Regulatory Services maintains a database of licensed child daycare providers in Beaufort County. In 2009, there were 17 licensed daycare centers on Hilton Head Island, which is a decline from 21 in 1999. Daycare on the Island is an important service, especially for the Island's workforce.

### **Primary and Secondary Education**

Public school educational services for the children in Beaufort County are available from the Beaufort County Board of Education. The Board is comprised of 11 elected members serving 4 year terms. Three members currently serve the Hilton Head Island community.

Elementary aged children on Hilton Head Island attend the Hilton Head Island Early Childhood Center on Pembroke Drive for grades Pre-Kindergarten through Kindergarten, and then have the choice of the Hilton Head Island International Baccalaureate Program or the Hilton Head Island School for the Creative Arts for grades 1-5. Students residing on Daufuskie Island attend the Daufuskie Island School for grades PK-5. Students on both Hilton Head Island and Daufuskie Island attend Hilton Head Island Middle School for grades 6-8 and Hilton Head Island High School for grades 9-12. These schools comprise the Hilton Head Cluster. There are no plans for the next 5 years for expansions to existing schools or additional new schools for the Hilton Head Island Cluster.

Additional public school choice options are the Riverview Charter School, serving grades K-5, AMES Academy for gifted and talented students (by application) in grades 3-5, and the Beaufort-Jasper Academy for Career Excellence, which is a public technical high school serving students grades 9-12 from 6 different high schools in the 2 counties.



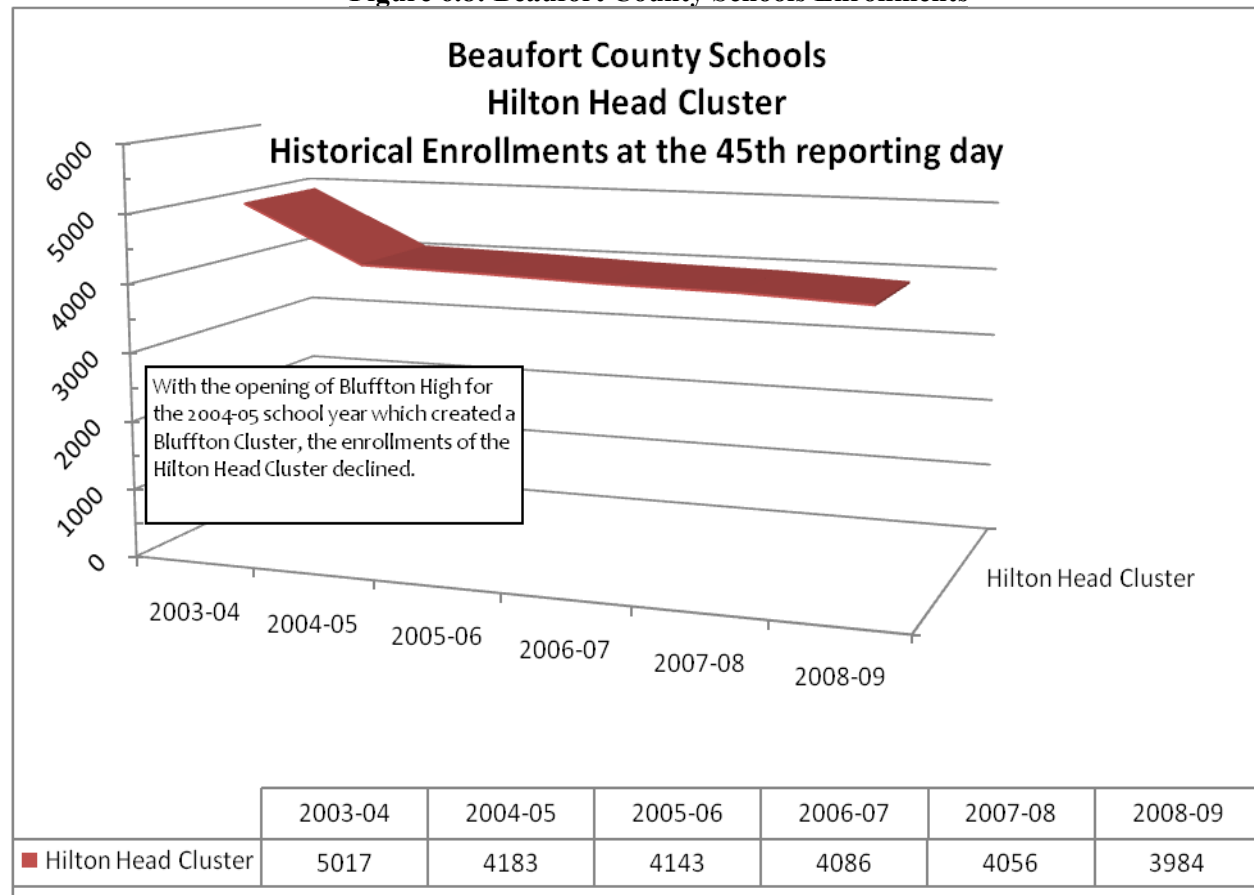
### **Enrollments – Historical and Projected**

Enrollments for the Hilton Head Cluster schools has been in a slow but steady decline for last five years and is anticipated to continue that trend for the next five years. This is indicative of the Island's aging population and limited potential for future growth. Figure 6.8 shows the enrollment history for the Hilton Head Cluster schools since the 2003-2004 school year. The drop in enrollment from the 2003-04 school year to the 2004-05 school year was due to the opening of Bluffton High School.

### **Private Education**

Private education institutions that serve elementary and secondary students on Hilton Head Island include the Hilton Head Christian Academy, the Hilton Head Preparatory School, the St. Francis Catholic School, Sea Pines Montessori School and Heritage Academy. There are also numerous programs and specialty need schools that are privately owned and operated.

**Figure 6.8: Beaufort County Schools Enrollments**



Source: Beaufort County School District.

Table 6.4 shows the enrollment levels in the Hilton Head Cluster schools for the past 5 school years:

**Table 6.4 Enrollment in Hilton Head Island Cluster**

<i>Year</i>	<i>PK to 5</i>	<i>6 to 8</i>	<i>9 to 12</i>
2004-05	2004	940	1144
2005-06	2048	941	1154
2006-07	1997	934	1155
2007-08	1956	900	1200
2008-09	1889	931	1164

Source: Beaufort County School District

Table 6.5 shows the projected enrollment in the Hilton Head Cluster schools from 2009 to 2014.

**Table 6.5 Projected Enrollments in Hilton Head Island Cluster**

<i>Year</i>	<i>PK to 5</i>	<i>6 to 8</i>	<i>9 to 12</i>
2009-10	1783	854	1098
2010-11	1760	809	1084
2011-12	1743	738	1055
2012-13	1745	734	989
2013-14	1762	696	951

Source: Beaufort County School District

### **Higher Education**

The University of South Carolina at Beaufort (USCB) is one of the Island's major resources for higher education. In 1983, USCB began offering courses in a leased facility located on the Island until April 2004 when USCB outgrew that facility due to increased enrollment and demand for expanded course offerings resulting from the rapid increase in population in Beaufort County. In 1994 International Paper gave eighty acres of land to build an additional full-service campus of USCB in southern Beaufort County, the region's highest growth area. The County government agreed to finance the construction of the campus if the school were designated as a four-year university. Once the state approved the four-year status, construction of the Hilton Head Island Gateway Campus (HHIG campus) began. Classes at the HHIG commenced in August of 2004. On-campus student apartments at the HHIG campus opened in the fall of 2005. The school's Campus Center opened in the fall of 2009 and houses a dining facility, gym, bookstore, offices and meeting space.

USCB is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and offers baccalaureate degrees and numerous continuing education programs. The university's degree programs respond to regional needs, draw upon regional strengths, and prepare graduates to participate successfully in communities here and around the globe.

USCB is a senior campus of the state's largest public university, the University of South Carolina. It brings USC's statewide mission of teaching, research, scholarship, and public service to the rapidly growing Lowcountry of South Carolina. Programs are offered in mathematics and the natural sciences, humanities, and professional and social sciences. Its curriculum is designed to promote acquisition of knowledge and, through it, the intellectual dispositions and skills that encourage depth of understanding, tolerance of others and individual accountability. Attracting a racially and culturally diverse student body of varying ages and experiences, the University of South Carolina Beaufort draws its students primarily from the South Carolina Lowcountry, with representation from other parts of the state, other states, and foreign countries. USCB currently serves approximately 1,650 students.

The Technical College of the Lowcountry serves the Island as well. One of sixteen colleges comprising the South Carolina Technical College System, the Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) traces its origin to the Mather School founded in 1868. TCL is a comprehensive, public, two-year college dedicated to serving the diverse educational needs of Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties. The College annually serves approximately 8,500 credit and continuing education students, a mix of traditional, non-traditional, full-time, and part-time. TCL provides quality, affordable academic and technical programs leading to Associate Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates.

Other adult education services are provided by Beaufort County School District, such as GED training and testing. One of the largest adult education organizations serving Hilton Head Island is USCB's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) programs. This program offers a wide variety of classes: philosophy, history, art, music, current events, political issues, religion, science, literature, languages, and many others.

## **Libraries**

Beaufort County operates a regional library on the north end of Hilton Head Island. Completed in 1998, this 26,000 square foot facility replaced the former 8,000 square foot library which in turn was converted into a Beaufort County Administrative Annex on William Hilton Parkway.

The Beaufort County library system operates as a fiscal and administrative department of County government. The Beaufort County Library Board of Trustees establishes library policy, monitors library operations, and makes recommendations to County Council concerning budget and planning and development.

The current building has 88,881 collection items. Current national standards recommend a per capita building level of service between 1.25 and 1.6 square feet. Beaufort County has also adopted a level of service standard of 3.5 collection items per capita. This results in 0.639 square feet per person and 2.18 collection items per person on the Island, making the Island's library deficient in relationship to these standards. Beaufort County currently has an expansion project planned for the library, which will help to improve the library's level of service.

Community meeting space is provided at the Hilton Head Island Library. Friends of the Library is an organization which helps the library through cash contributions, book sales and volunteer services. The Heritage Library is also a non-profit organization that provides a facility for reference materials on the Island's history.

## **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Adequate daycare services should be provided to support the Island's workforce.
- Enrollment trends and future projections indicate no immediate need for additional school facilities on the Island.
- Continuing and adult education has been identified as important to Island citizens. More on-island opportunities should be considered for higher education.
- Because of the resort nature of the Town's economy there are opportunities to expand higher education in areas that support the local economy, such as culinary arts, golf and hospitality services.
- Adequate library facilities and services are important to the community. Continued implementation of the levels of service adopted by the County should be considered.

## **6.10 Capital Improvement Program**

There is a strong link between the Town's Comprehensive Plan and its Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Coordination of the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan is a major objective of the planning process. All elements of the Comprehensive Plan should be consistent and the Comprehensive Plan should be financially feasible. Financial feasibility is determined using professionally accepted methodologies and applies to a 10 year planning period, which is the scope of the CIP. In accordance with State Law, the proposed CIP for each fiscal year is developed by staff for review and recommendation to the Town's Planning Commission. The pathways and parks section is also reviewed by the Town's Parks and Recreation Commission. The Planning Commission recommends the proposed CIP to Town Council for adoption during the CIP Budget Workshop around May of each year. Projects contained in the Town's CIP relate to roads, government facilities, park facilities, pathways, drainage improvements and beach renourishment.

"Existing Infrastructure and Improvements" is the largest funded program of the current CIP indicating the expansion of the Town's services in areas of property and facility maintenance. Recent CIP projects have included the construction of Compass Rose Park, redevelopment of Coligny Beach Park, realignment of Office Park and Wild Horse Roads, as well as the construction of a Fire and Rescue Training Center.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The strong link that exists between the Capital Improvement Program and the Comprehensive Plan helps to ensure that public investment in municipal facilities and infrastructure is coordinated with the Town's projected growth and development. This relationship is important and should be maintained during the development of future Capital Improvement Plans.
- During the annual review of the CIP, the goals and implementation strategies adopted in the Comprehensive Plan should be used to assist in the development of project identification and prioritization.

## 6.11 Goals and Implementation Strategies

### Goals

#### 6.1 Build-out

- A. The goal is to provide innovative and visionary initiatives that mitigate challenges of growth and redevelopment while making available higher levels of service for community facilities in a fiscally responsible manner.

#### 6.2 Town Government

- A. The goal is to provide excellent Town services funded through a variety of revenue sources.
- B. The goal is to provide the staff and requisite facilities to maintain the superior administration of all Town government functions as the community's needs increase.
- C. The goal is to work toward a more balanced composition of Town boards that better reflects the diversity of the Island's population.
- D. The goal is to set an example for the community by maintaining Town projects and properties in a manner that preserves and enhances the Island's character.

#### 6.3 Transportation Network

- A. The goal is to provide a transportation network that includes opportunities for roadway, pathway, water-based and air-based transportation to and on the Island.
- B. The goal is to have a safe, efficient and well maintained regional and local roadway network.
- C. The goal is to protect the bridges that provide the only ground transportation link from the Island to the Mainland.
- D. The goal is to have a pathway network that provides for recreational opportunities as well as an alternative means of transportation to and on the Island.

#### 6.4 Town Acquired Property

- A. The goal is to preserve and protect the Island's character through land acquisition.
- B. The goal is to assess the utility and character of Town acquired property.

#### 6.5 Utilities

- A. The goal is to have a safe and effective utility system that minimizes interruption in services.
- B. The goal is to provide adequate water service for both domestic use and fire safety to all areas of the Island.
- C. The goal is to address the challenges that salt water intrusion presents for Island water sources.
- D. The goal is to promote water conservation.
- E. The goal is to have sewer service Island-wide.
- F. The goal is to have well maintained, effective stormwater infrastructure on the Island.
- G. The goal is to have a solid waste and recycling program for the Island and to educate residents and visitors on the benefits of recycling.
- H. The goal is to improve the utility and cooperative use of publicly owned easements on the Island.

## **6.6 Public Safety**

- A. The goal is to have adequate and cost effective law enforcement services for the Island.
- B. The goal is to provide Fire and Rescue and Emergency Management services to Island residents and visitors.

## **6.7 Communications**

- A. The goal is to have effective communication services that minimize service interruptions on the Island that support emergency management as well as economic development applications.

## **6.8 Health Care Services**

- A. The goal is to have adequate, cost effective health care service for Island residents and visitors.
- B. The goal is to work toward provisions that would allow for aging in place on Hilton Head Island.
- C. The goal is to provide for safe and efficient evacuation including Island medical facilities in accordance with the Town's adopted Emergency Management Plans.
- D. The goal is to coordinate with the County and other appropriate organizations regarding the provision of a final resting place for members of the community.

## **6.9 Educational Facilities**

- A. The goal is to have adequate daycare facilities for the Island's workforce and residents.
- B. The goal is to coordinate with educational agencies in the community to meet the educational needs of the Island's population.

## **6.10 Capital Improvement Program**

- A. The goal is to have a Capital Improvement Program that is grounded in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

# **Implementation Strategies**

## **6.1 Build-out**

- A. Continue a n ong oing a ssessment of c ommunity f acility ne eds in the Town a s g rowth and redevelopment continue.
- B. Develop visionary and innovative initiatives to mitigate challenges of build-out in a proactive manner that considers fiscal responsibility and the community's willingness to pay.

## **6.2 Town Government**

- A. Review the scope of Town government to determine if any increases or decreases should be made to the services that are provided by the Town.
- B. Develop a long range plan to address staffing levels of existing and potential new departments, and to consider the facility needs of the Town staff for the next twenty years.
- C. Ensure that adequate facilities are available to continue the high level of services offered by the Town.
- D. Research the av ailability of n ew funding s ources t hat w ill h elp t o diversify the Town's r evenue sources and assist in funding any new services that may be provided by the Town.
- E. Promote di verse pa rticipation of all m embers of the c ommunity t hrough a ppointments to B oards, Commissions and Task Forces.
- F. Maintain the economic capacity to provide for the operation and maintenance of Town projects and properties.

### 6.3 Transportation Network

- A. Coordinate with the County of Beaufort and the SCDOT (South Carolina Department of Transportation) to implement the recommendations included in the Town's annual Traffic Monitoring and Evaluation Report and to ensure that high quality maintenance is provided for the Island's roadway network.
- B. Coordinate with appropriate agencies for the protection and routine maintenance of the bridges and causeways.
- C. Continue to expand the Island's pathway network.
- D. Coordinate with SCDOT and Beaufort County to provide a pathway link to the mainland.

### 6.4 Town Acquired Property

- A. Continue funding the Town's Land Acquisition Program.
- B. Evaluate the policies of the Town's Land Acquisition Program to determine if any changes are needed to better address the changing needs of the community as it builds out and reaches maturity.
- C. Create a Town-owned property master plan.
- D. Monitor development activities adjacent to Town-owned property.

### 6.5 Utilities

- A. Take a leadership role in seeking funding sources and cooperative agreements with the existing PSDs for the construction of sewer lines where needed. Continue to coordinate with HHPSD on the implementation of its Sewer Master Plan.
- B. Continue to Implement the Town's Sewer Policy.
- C. Continue to evaluate the positive and negative consequences of additional combinations of the three separate PSDs.
- D. Encourage the development of a joint sludge composting operation on the Island with participation from solid waste disposal and recycling organizations.
- E. Coordinate with Island PSDs to evaluate Island water needs in relationship to the impacts of salt water intrusion.
- F. Promote water conservation through joint efforts with Island PSDs and educate island residents, visitors and businesses about the importance of reducing water use.
- G. Use reclaimed water when maintaining Town projects where financially feasible.
- H. Research and compile data on the amount of waste produced by Island residents and businesses, and use that data to determine target amounts for recycling.
- I. Develop an effective recycling program for the Island and educate residents, visitors and business owners about recycling options.
- J. Cooperate with the County and appropriate agencies to seek funding sources to increase the capacity and level of service for recycling on the Island.
- K. Continue to fund Town Hazardous Waste Roundups.
- L. Continue to fund the Island's power line burial program.
- M. Coordinate with Santee Cooper and other easement holders to explore the use of such easements for such uses as wildlife corridors, roadway connections and parking.
- N. Continue to improve Island stormwater infrastructure.
- O. Continue to develop cooperative agreements with Island PUDs for maintenance of stormwater infrastructure.

### 6.6 Public Safety

- A. Continue to assess the adequacy of all public safety services, including law enforcement, in light of updated resident population and visitor figures.
- B. Please refer to the Fire & Rescue Master Plan and the emergency management plan for needs, goals, and implementation strategies for public safety.



## **6.7 Communications**

- A. Communication improvements should be made to improve capacity for economic development (3G) and emergency management through cooperation with service providers.

## **6.8 Health Care Services**

- A. Coordinate with health care providers to access health care needs for the aging population.

## **6.9 Educational Facilities**

- A. Cooperate with the public school district, Island non-profit organizations, and concerned citizens to assess the Island's daycare facilities and propose potential ways to improve daycare options.
- B. Encourage Beaufort County to provide adequate resources and funding for the library located on Hilton Head Island.

## **6.10 Capital Improvement Program**

- A. Utilize recommended strategies contained in the Town's Comprehensive Plan as the driving force for the development of the Town's Capital Improvement Program.
- B. Estimate the impacts of continued operations and maintenance of all proposed facilities as part of the development of the Capital Improvements portion of the annual budget.

## 7 Economic Development

*To define, foster, and enhance the economic environment that sustains Hilton Head Island's unique way of life.*

### Introduction

The Town of Hilton Head Island has developed into a nationally and internationally known premier resort and retirement community. The appeal of the Island to retirees, visitors, and permanent residents is a very favorable climate, environmental attractiveness and perceived sensitivity to environmental preservation with public controls on growth to preserve natural attractiveness, coupled with high quality amenities and infrastructure.

The Town of Hilton Head Island has preserved a relaxed, small town feel while evolving an economic system where the sources of wealth (residents, second homes and visitors) are balanced with a growing private service and retail sector through the sensitive interplay of public authority, land use, and governmental controls. The notion that resonated throughout interviews, surveys, and public meetings (outlined in the “Element Knowledge Input” subsection below) provided the following overall insight:

*The Community and officials alike feel that they like the Island pretty much the way it is now (meaning to retain the existing character, spirit, and experience of the Island) and understand that it has reached somewhat of a maturity phase in its development (versus its earlier rapid growth). To a great extent this is a vote of confidence in the governance of the Island thus far. They indicated “character preservation” over growth, with “sensitive renewal” now being the key to guide regulation and controls. The guidance being to preserve, wherever possible, those legacy attributes of the Island that attracted residents and visitors in the first place.*

*“Sensitive (re)development” dominates the thinking (versus development in earlier stages) with calls for the exercise of “flexibility” and applying “good judgment” in controls often on a case by case basis in order to preserve the essential “character” of the Island.*

*These insights present new challenges for planning, governance and regulation.*

The central issue now is how to sustain this economic system as the Town transitions from a successful growth phase to relative maturity while preserving the natural settings, fragile ecology, amenities and infrastructure that will continue to attract and retain retirees, visitors and new residents.

The Economic Development Element will discuss issues raised in connection with growth, ecology, amenities and infrastructure and present some potential strategies for consideration by Town Governance.

### Element Knowledge Input

Unless otherwise attributed, the background information, and knowledge gained, for this element was synthesized from an inventory and analysis of existing conditions and findings based on 30 interviews with community leaders in 2007, 2008 and 2009, consultant structured interviews (67 stakeholders), a consultant administered Community Assessment Survey in 2008 (564 responses), and direct neighborhood meetings (attended by 343 Islanders).

## 7.1 Comprehensive Plan Approach<sup>27</sup>

Beginning in November 2007 element meetings were conducted to outline a rigorous approach to develop the Economic Development Element and the Comprehensive Plan. The existing comprehensive planning process was merged with a best practice business planning methodology with the framework shown in Figure 1.

## 7.2 Economic Model<sup>28</sup>

This approach led to the formulation of the following preliminary economic dynamic model for the Town of Hilton Head Island shown in Figure 2.

Residents/Second Home Owners and Visitors/Tourism sectors are the economic engines while the Retail and Service sector is the integrator for Island wealth creation.

## 7.3 Economic Development Discussion

Since the Town was incorporated in 1983, Hilton Head Island has developed a relatively stable economic system enabled by the two well springs of economic wealth (Residents/Second Home Owners and Visitors/Tourism - Model Figure 2)

- Residents and second home owners have increased residential capital invested on the Island from \$3.5 Billion in 1994 to \$13.8 billion in 2008 while the value of nonresidential property has increase from \$800 million to \$3.1 billion over the same time period.<sup>29</sup>
- Visitors have steadily increased from nearly 1 million at the time the Town's incorporation to nearly 2.5 million in 2000.<sup>30</sup> Visitor rates have declined somewhat since then to around two million in 2008. Overall the increase in visitors has generated an increase in nonresidential, service sector, capital invested from \$372 million to over \$1.5 billion today.<sup>31</sup> (Economic Development Table 7.3)
- Town government revenues from residential, visitors and service sectors have increased from \$18.3 million in 2003 to \$36.2 million in 2008.<sup>32</sup>
- Presently, there are more than 600 real estate executives employed on the Island.<sup>30</sup>
- 61% of local jobs are tourism-related.<sup>30</sup>
- Tourism in the Hilton Head Island area employs over 10,000 people living both on the Island and in the surrounding communities.<sup>30</sup>
- Approximately 43 percent of the 5,000 licensed Island enterprises are retail and service-oriented companies.<sup>30</sup>
- Retail operations and restaurants, in particular, have grown on Hilton Head Island.<sup>30</sup>
- Tourism contributes more than \$1.5 billion into the Hilton Head Island area economy annually.<sup>30</sup>
- Visitor accommodations on Hilton Head Island pay nearly \$20 million in property taxes to Beaufort County.<sup>30</sup>
- Sales taxes paid by Hilton Head Island visitors total \$47 million. Taxes paid by visitors save every South Carolina taxpayer more than \$200 each year in state taxes.<sup>30</sup>

27 See Figure 7.1

28 See Figure 7.2

29 Beaufort County Assessor Data

30 Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce

31 Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

32 Town of Hilton Head Island Consolidated Municipal Budget

- Last year, \$2.5 million in accommodation taxes paid by visitors was awarded to community organizations and Town government to help<sup>30</sup>:
  - Promote tourism
  - Nourish beaches
  - Support beach parks
  - Build pathways
  - Support various cultural organizations
  - Pathway rehabilitation
- This system has created a dynamic and broad-based service industry infrastructure, based largely on hospitality, tourism and residential support, which provides a relatively stable economic base for the Island.

## 7.4 Key Island Economic Assets and Capabilities

The key assets and capabilities that have contributed to the Island's economic success are:

- Unparalleled natural assets in the form of 13 miles of pristine beaches, green spaces, parks, trees and waterways which have been maintained and protected by both early restrictive covenants and a Town governance process focused on the need to protect and preserve these natural assets. These natural assets not only make the Island environmentally pleasing, but also are key tangible assets of Hilton Head Island's economy in attracting and retaining residents and visitors alike.
- An evolved community culture with a niche image of a quieter, natural experience for visitors and residents alike having a real "Island" feel.
- Access and communication via a land bridge which increases the opportunity for relatively low cost transportation for visitors, residents, and employees.
- Sensitive regulation and ordinance that owe much to the vision of the early Island founders and developers, resulting in a recognizable (and marketable) Hilton Head Island image and style as a recreation and residential resort. This "brand" image is a key intangible economic asset for the Island.
- Development of a first class, diverse, service sector offering friendly hospitality for families, outstanding sporting facilities in the form of PGA caliber golf and renowned tennis facilities, diverse restaurants, medical support, and educational opportunities to enable residential and visitor growth.

## 7.5 Potential Risks for Future Economy with Comprehensive Plan Implications<sup>33</sup>

There are potential risks to the Island's economic future that should be addressed:

- The primary access to the Island, which has proven to be so vital to the growth of its economy, is dependent on a road bridge system. Any significant disruption to this critical gateway from marine shipping damage, or other major event, would have a serious impact on the Island's economy. No volume-capable alternative currently exists. The Island's small airport is limited in capacity (around 4% of visitors historically arrive by air – Figure 3) and expansion capability is limited.
- In addition, continued mainland growth coupled with no plans to widen Interstate 95 or Interstate 26 may limit future access to the Island. This issue will be addressed in the Transportation Element.
- The Island has reached a stage of relative maturity from its earlier rapid growth in the life cycle of its development. Some of its hospitality and other service sector assets are aging (becoming "tired")

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<sup>33</sup> See Figure 7.5

looking) and are in need of revitalization or potential replacement. “Sensitive Redevelopment” has become a major theme resonating from the research interviews and community input. Older condominium units, in particular, present a challenge due to the multiplicity of owners in any given development.

- “Flexibility” (where reasonable people may disagree but must find a solution) in the application of historic regulation and ordinance was called for to improve existing non-conformities and future redevelopment.
- Preservation of natural assets - Continual protection, nourishing and replenishing of beaches, dunes and native vegetation with continuity of the Town's successful land acquisition program to preserve green space and control density is vital to the future economic potential of the Island.
- With the early rapid growth of the base economic engines of residential and visitor investment slowing, as the Island approaches maturity, efforts should be focused on initiatives for enriching the economic potential while preserving the essential character and natural assets that have been responsible for the Island's success.
- A sustainable workforce will become essential to the future economic potential of the Island and is essential to support the social economic population mixing that is vital for a vibrant and sustainable economy. To be sustainable over the horizon envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan such a workforce needs both appropriate education and training, and access to affordable housing. While efforts for education and training may be broadly addressed on a regional basis, the current strategy for affordable housing seems to hinge on a “pool of labor” being accessible off Island. While this may be valid short-term (3-5 years) thinking, it is a costly one for employers on Island and is a contributing factor in driving business “off Island”. One Island employer, for example, estimates that employee labor costs incur a penalty in excess of \$ 2000 per employee per year for “crossing the bridge”. Potential development in the Jasper County and other areas west of the Island will likely put severe competitive pressure on this off-Island labor pool which, in turn, may threaten the Island's access to this “pool”.

## **7.6 Potential Strategies with Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

In addition to the ongoing work that the Chamber of Commerce and Town have engaged in tourism and residential attraction, consideration should be given to leveraging and growing high value added business, and business travel and hospitality, segments that are consistent with, or do not threaten, the Island's character or natural assets, such as:

- Become more focused on major national and international corporations with a view to becoming a premier corporate meeting location. Hilton Head Island has natural beauty, sporting and hospitality amenities but is comparatively unknown in the corporate world and may be limited by the capacity of its airport to safely and effectively support corporate aircraft transportation (the latter to be addressed by the Transportation Element).
- Promotion of the Island as world class, but quiet, well-maintained, coastal Island resort community with hi-speed telecommunication capability, road, sea and air access that may lend itself to segments like consulting, some focused medical or medical/sporting research where it is possible to operate with remote capability (“telecommuting”) and also enjoy a rich Island lifestyle.
- Off season arts, education, culinary and sports festivals leveraging off such successes as Heritage Golf Tournament, the Concours d'Elegance, and the Wine Festival. With more than 60 miles of cycling and walking track now becoming interconnected, the Island is gaining a national (and possibly international via word-of-mouth) reputation as an excellent facility for casual cycling events. This should be capitalized on as should the potential to develop a Center for Gullah Studies and a Central Arts Facility.

- Major theme #4 “Mobility and Access” identified the Island’s airport as “a community asset requiring sensitive development” and that the Town should “own the airport as an asset”, especially in growing the business travel and hospitality segment of the economy. Consideration should be given to such ownership with the thought of developing the airport in line with similar assets owned by other major upscale resort communities. Direct ownership may not be a high priority within the short term (3-5 years), especially given the magnitude of the current recession, but certainly within the 20 year scope of the Comprehensive Plan. A well-developed, small Island airport is a key tool in further enhancing the Island’s economy through potential for growth in the niche, premier corporate meeting and functions segment.
- Identify and prioritize areas in need of re-development including any obsolete, or rundown, commercial buildings. Incentivize the development of flexibility of streamlining in regulation of density caps, setbacks (and other controls) that enable a qualitative, principle based, asset revitalization that enhance the Island’s positive legacies.
- A revitalization of effort to attract residential and retiree growth emphasizing not only character and natural assets but the quality, and breadth, of the service infrastructure that has developed relative to its competitor communities along the southeast coast.

## 7.7 Some Key Implementation Strategies

- In collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and key Island or leading regional businesses, consider forming a “Business Renewal Task Force” (or equivalent concept) to focus on, and identify and assess, potential opportunities to supplement, or enrich, the economic space that may be becoming vacated by the slowing of traditional growth from tourism and residential sectors. Again, any potential opportunities should be consistent with, or not threaten, the Island’s character or natural assets.
- Also in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, USCB, TCL and other agencies such as SCORE give consideration to the development of a Center for Economic Excellence for small businesses. The purpose would be to provide practical business education, training and consulting support for potential local entrepreneurs wishing to set up and/or grow and diversify small business enterprises in the Island’s retail and service economy.
- Foster a renewed and positive mindset between Staff, Town Council and the public in accepting that the challenges of maturity - versus growth - require a different, and in many cases more complex, regulatory and management approach.
- Champion innovation in Community Planning and reward creative concepts of approach to legacy issues, such as the need for affordable housing, revitalization of public transport, recycling, etc... and need for new initiatives such as the arts and corporate meeting centers of attraction.
- Continue to address recommendations from Ward 1 Master Plan such as:
  - Expansion of the pathway network and paved roads to improve access for employment and economic growth.
  - Coordination with Hilton Head Public Service District to expand sewer service.
  - Ward 1 is also seen as a gateway to the Island and should be high on action list for redevelopment.
- Consider setting up a Land Planning and/or “Green Practices” Center of Excellence based on, and leveraging off, Hilton Head Island early visionary thinking (Fraser principles), heritage learnings, and leading edge knowledge gained from the development of renowned developments such as those at Sea Pines.
- As a further tool to attract and retain retirees (i.e. those who have choice of location for retirement) consider developing a “Center for Creative Retirement” using the well publicized, and successful, Asheville NC model as a guide. The North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement (NCCCR) is an award-winning, internationally-acclaimed learning community dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, leadership, community service, and research.
- Consider also the Fraser vision of Hilton Head Island becoming an “Aspen East” with the development of a “Institute for Learning and Arts” on Island. The Aspen Institute Harman-

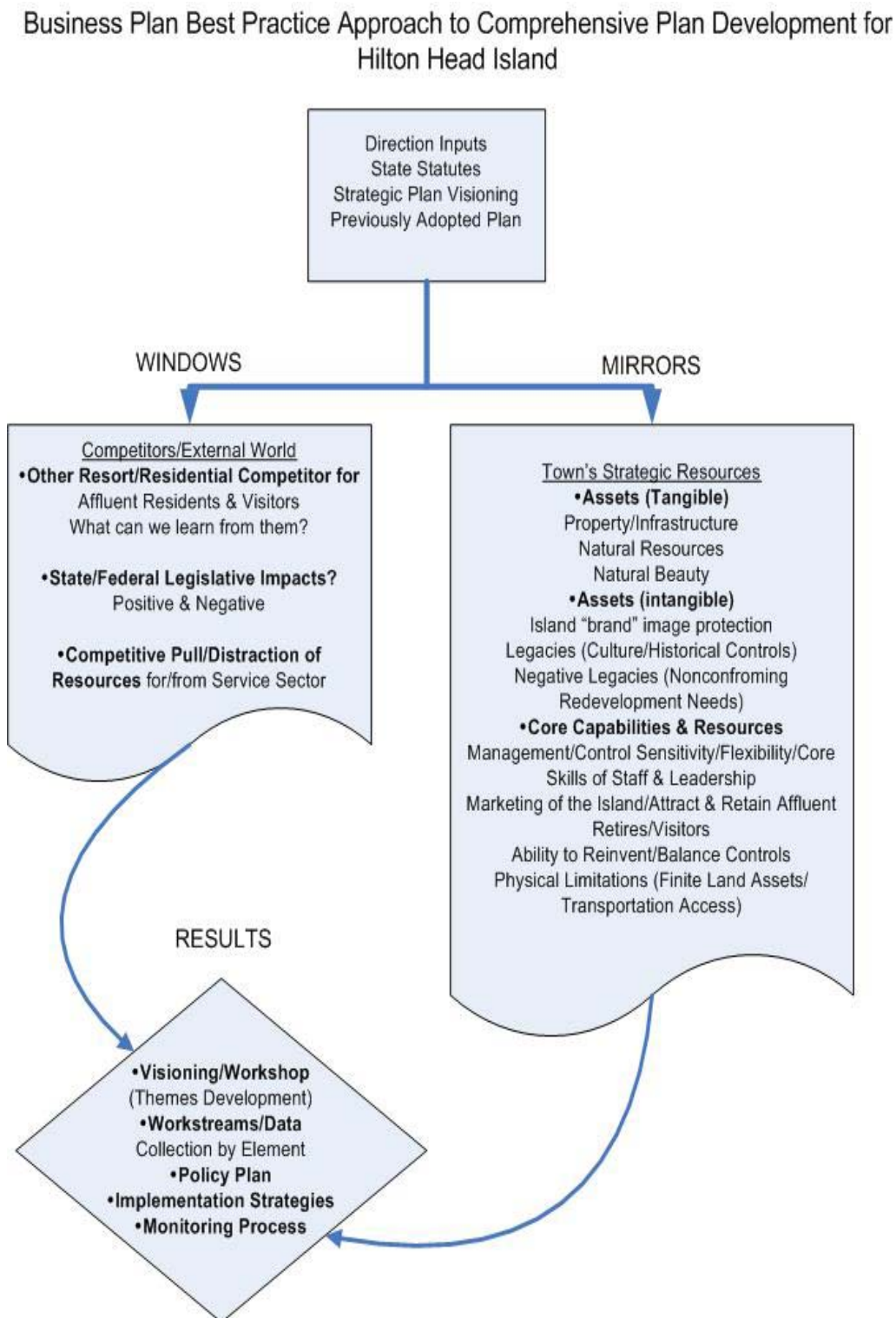


Eisner Program in the Arts was established to support and invigorate the arts in America and to return the arts and artists to the center of the Aspen Institute's "Great Conversation". It brings artists and art works to the Institute, and it also brings together leading artists, arts managers, sponsors and patrons to generate, exchange and develop ideas and policies to assure vibrancy and dynamism in all artistic realms, and to enrich civic culture in ways only the arts can do.

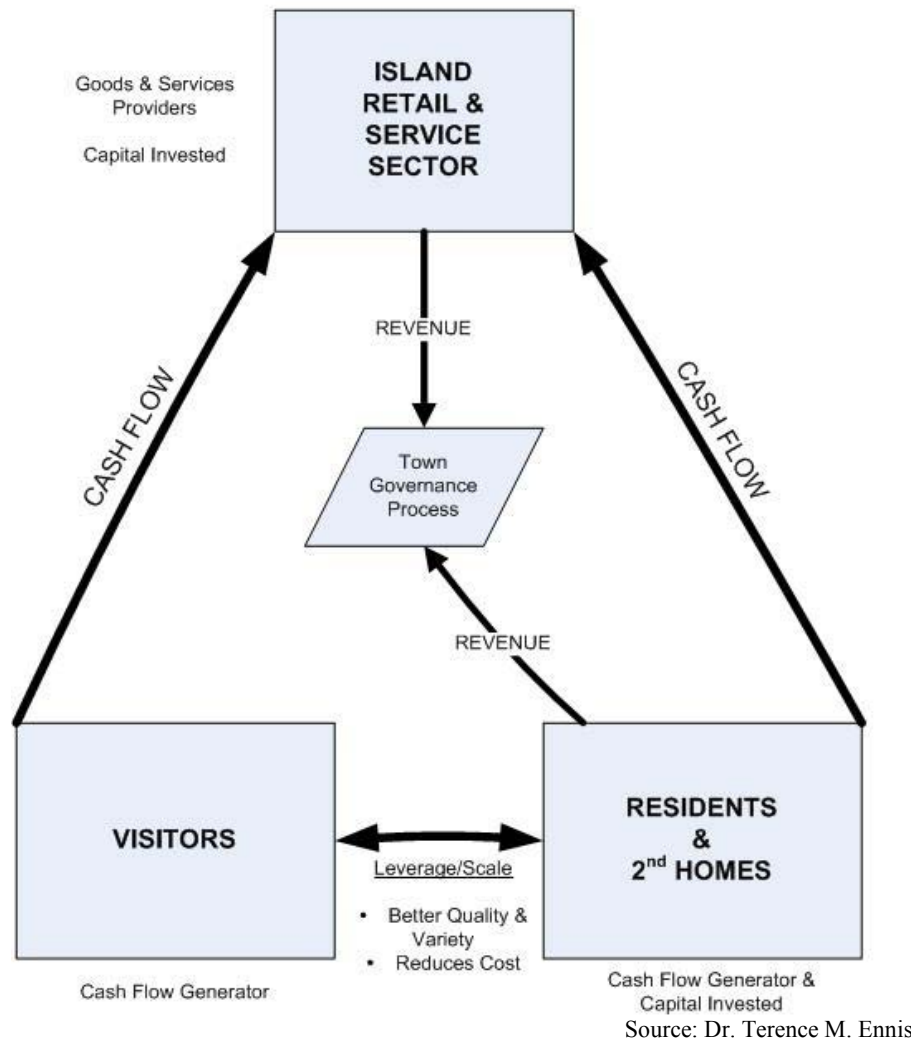
- Solutions to the sustainable workforce issue (7.6) should be addressed in a fully systemic way, analyzing learnings from past initiatives, including the potential for low cost public transportation options (both on and off and within the Island), collaborative employer and developer nonprofit initiatives (Silicon Valley, Charleston models), planned mixed use developments, consideration for conservation based land banks and workforce advisory committees. The issue is vital to the economic future of the Island requiring a full palette of solutions and tools.
- The question of the future of Hilton Head Island Airport has become highly emotional in the community necessitating that an informed “position” be developed from a Hilton Head Island Town perspective (versus the current Airport Master Plan development which views the airport from a “regional” perspective). Consideration should be given to a small Town sponsored Island work group to examine the Airport’s significance to the Island’s future, as part of the overall transportation/communication system of the Island that considers aspects such as, but not limited to:
  - Creating a financial baseline analysis of continued airport operations versus alternate land/asset use.
  - Viability for future commercial airline use as part of the overall transportation system serving the Island and leveraging off the learnings of value to community of other Island airport models.
  - Use of the airport to facilitate currently underserved markets such as the lucrative corporate hospitality and meetings segment (a relatively quick survey of Fortune 200 corporations should establish potential opportunity) and the rapidly growing telecommuting market (several communities exist in Colorado to serve as examples)
- Encouragement should be given to upgrading electronic telecommunication capability on the Island to facilitate development of the telecommuting market segment. Far too many wireless “cold” spots exist and 3G (third generation) capability on the Island (and higher as it evolves) is limited and spotty. A necessary element of the evolution of the Island’s economy will be the need to embrace the upgrading of reliable wireless capability if the Island is to attract and retain the rapidly growing telecommuting community market segment. Best Management Practice communities, such as Aspen CO, provide excellent learning opportunities to adopt on the Island.

## 7.8 Figures

**Figure 7.1: Business Plan Best Practice Approach for Development of Hilton Head Island's Comprehensive Plan**



Source: Based on original work by Dr Ned Bowman (Wharton) and best practice surveys by Dr. Terence M. Ennis, Business Management Consulting

**Figure 7.2: Economic Model for Hilton Head Island****ECONOMIC MODEL- STABLE, SIMPLE, INTERDEPENDENT SYSTEM**

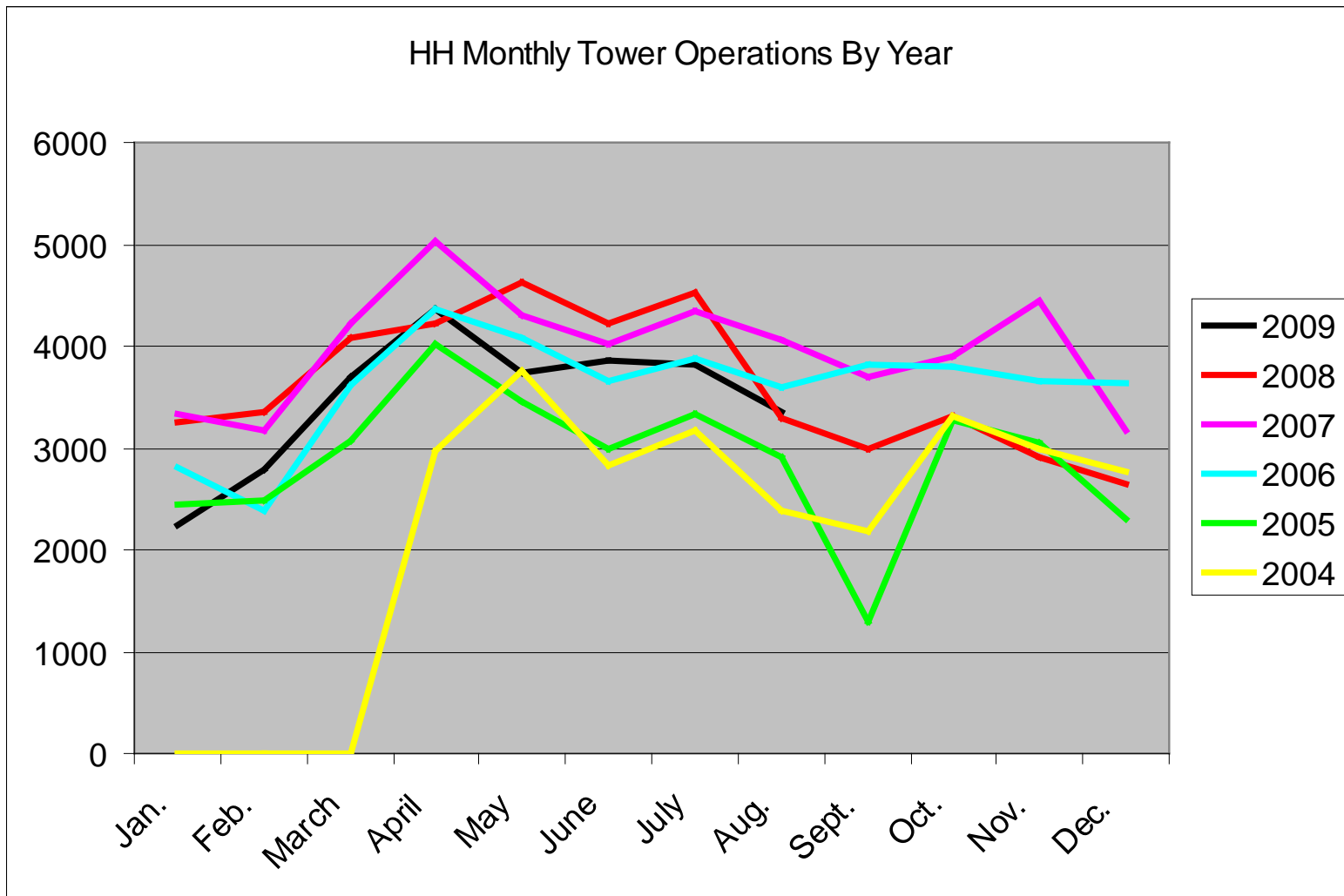
- Interdependent, Relatively Stable Economic System Evolved
- Driven By:
  - Unparalleled Natural Assets
  - Access Via Land
  - Sensitive Governance and Regulation in Development
  - Evolved Culture and Brand Image (Quieter, Natural Experience, "Island Feel")
- Risks:
  - Restriction/Disruption of Road Access
  - Loss of Brand Image (Insensitive Development)
  - Failure to Appreciate Interdependence
  - Urge to 'Diversify' Beyond the Theme that has Evolved for the Island

**Table 7.1: Hilton Head Island Annual Visitors and Expenditures**

YEAR	NUMBER OF ANNUAL VISITORS	ANNUAL EXPENDITURES
1986	950,000	\$371,972,000
1987	1,100,000	\$410,801,000
1988	1,200,000	\$485,000,000
1989	1,400,000	\$529,000,000
1990	1,594,000	\$577,000,000
1991	1,544,000	\$567,000,000
1992	1,651,000	\$583,000,000
1993	1,634,000	\$603,000,000
1994	1,583,000	\$652,000,000
1995	1,640,000	\$684,600,000
1996	1,831,000	\$987,000,000
1997	2,383,000	\$1,400,000,000
1998	2,533,000	\$1,500,000,000
1999	2,401,000	\$1,501,000,000
2000	2,485,517	\$1,563,000,000
2001	2,261,092	\$1,455,000,000
2002	2,195,530	\$1,475,000,000
2003	2,183,231	\$1,485,000,000
2004	2,248,389	\$1,500,000,000
2005	2,302,370	\$1,550,000,000
2006	2,235,131	\$1,546,000,000
2007	2,141,325	\$1,585,000,000
2008	2,013,405	\$1,532,000,000

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

**Figure 7.3: Hilton Head Island Airport Monthly Tower Operations by Year**



Source: Hilton Head Island Airport

**Figure 7.4: Hilton Head Island Passenger Arrivals – Monthly Trends**

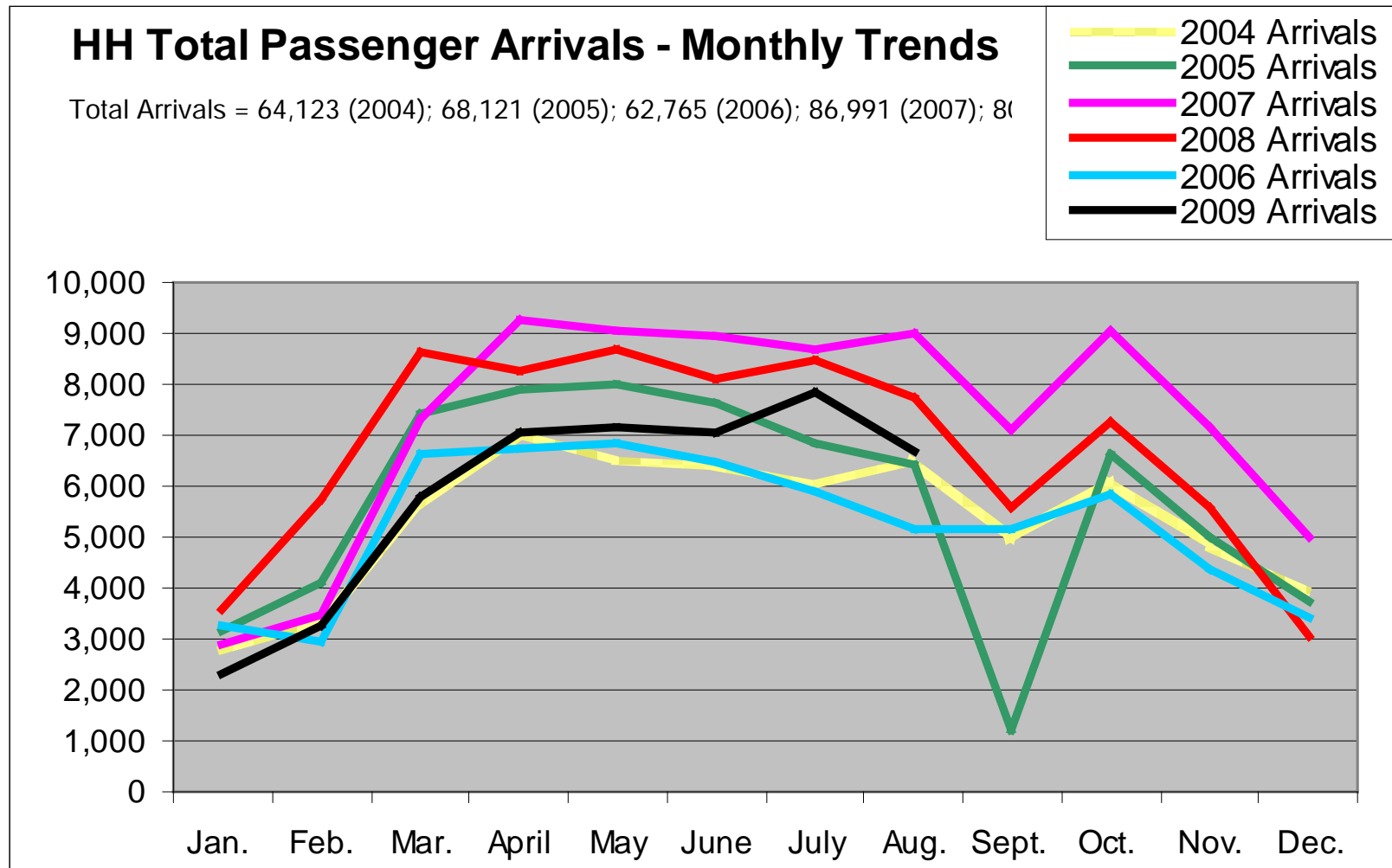
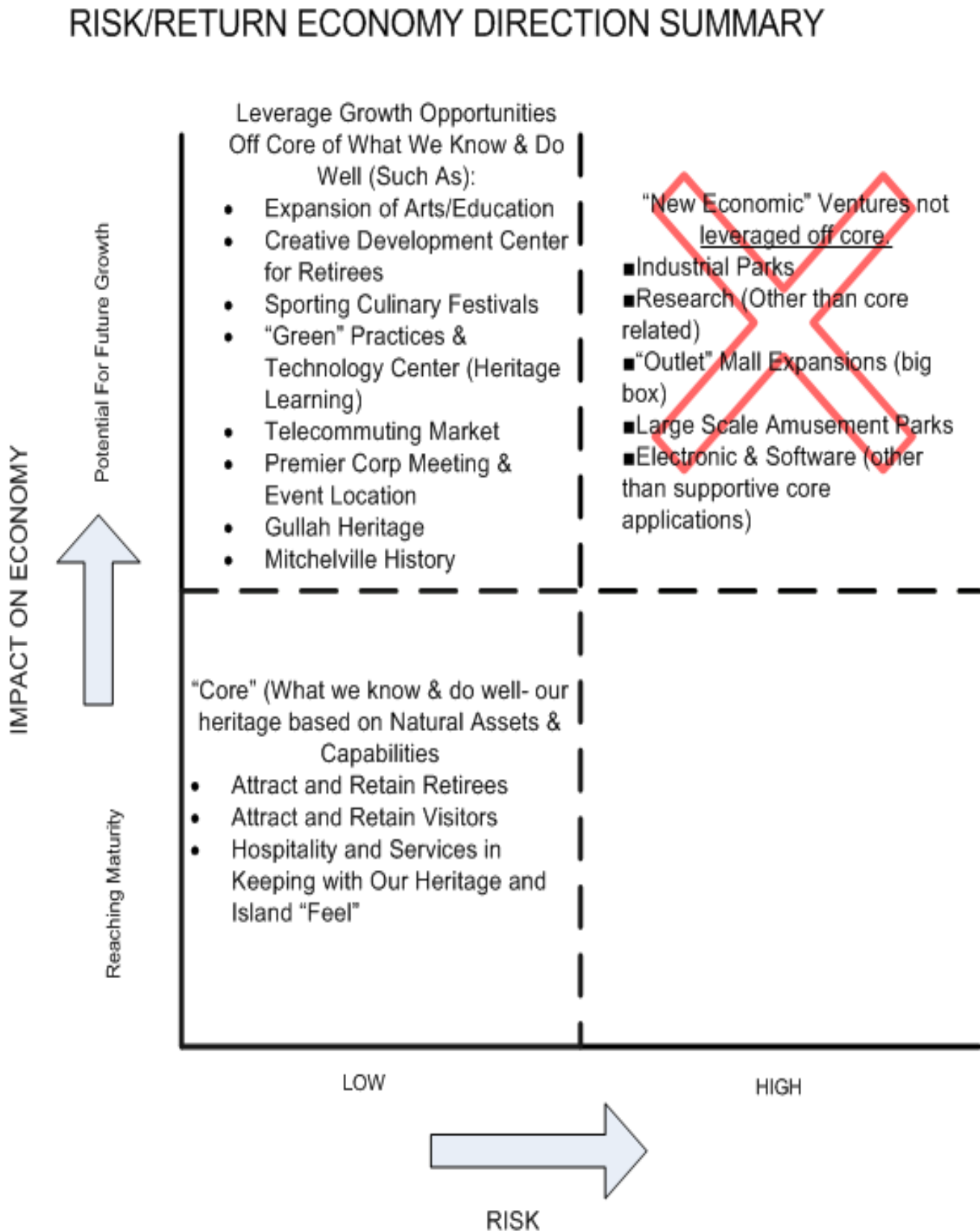




Figure 7.5: Risk/Reward Economy Direction Summary



**X** Denotes don't go there.

## 8 Land Use

*Provide for a high quality of life by planning for population growth, public and private development and redevelopment, and the proper distribution, location, and intensity of land uses with adequate levels of services, while maintaining and protecting the natural resources, residential neighborhoods and the overall character of the Town.*

### Introduction

The Town of Hilton Head Island is comprised of 21,862 acres, the equivalent of 34.2 square miles for land above the mean high tide mark. The municipal limits include all of Hilton Head Island, Buck Island, and a portion of Jenkins Island. This is further broken into a variety of different land uses.

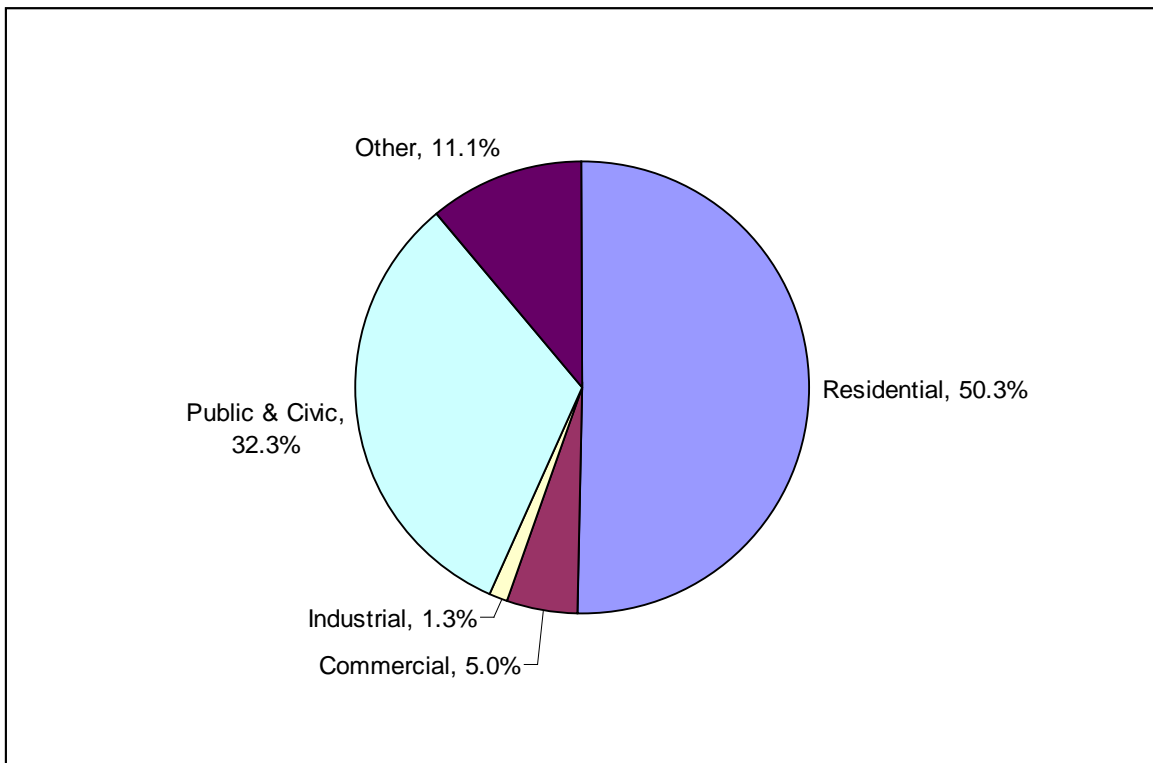
The existing land use of the Islands should be the backbone to all development decisions and redevelopment strategies. It is important that the amount and location of each land use category is at a sustainable level for the existing and projected population of the Town and vice versa. While previous regulations were aimed toward managed growth, future policies should focus more on redevelopment strategies and should consider creative alternatives to traditional zoning classifications and regulations. Education on the purpose of regulations and creative, flexible approaches to redevelopment of the Island should be emphasized as development patterns change and the Island matures.

### 8.1 Existing Land Use

The Town of Hilton Head Island is physically separated from Beaufort County by water. The municipal boundaries of the Town include land on Hilton Head and Buck Islands and Jenkins Island, with the exception of Windmill Harbour, Mariners Point, and Blue Heron Point. The Town of Hilton Head Island is 21,862 acres, the equivalent of 34.2 square miles. This is the land area above the mean high tide mark. Figure 8.1 illustrates the municipal boundaries of the Town of Hilton Head Island in relationship to the entire island.

Of the 21,862 acres in the Town, 20,524 acres (94%) are classified in a generalized land use category and then broken down into more specific land use types. The remaining 1,338 acres (6%) percent is classified as road right of way or other areas that may be water, wetlands or other land that is not contained within a parcel. Figure 8.2 illustrates the existing land use of the Island. This was documented by Town Community Development Staff in the field by observation and further researched using building and development permits and business licenses.

As shown in Figure 8.1, one half of the land use area is being used as residential, either single family or multi-family. The “Other” category is slightly over 11 percent, which includes vacant parcels. Public and Civic is slightly less than one third at 32.3 percent and includes Town parks, recreation areas and beach access. Industrial is the lowest land use at only 1.3 percent and commercial at 5 percent. The figure below provides a visual representation of the breakdown of existing land use by category type. This information is based on existing land use data from December 2008.

**Figure 8.1: Land Use Percentage by Category**

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island, Community Development Department, 2008

Parcels lacking development on the site, with no buildings or other site improvements were classified as vacant. Vacant parcels represent 2,140 acres of land, with 1,391 acres (65%) located outside of the planned unit developments.

According to information from the Town of Hilton Head Island, Planning Department in 1998 there were 4,349.1 acres classified as vacant. The amount of vacant land has decreased by 2,208.6 acres (49.2%) from 1998 to 2008.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

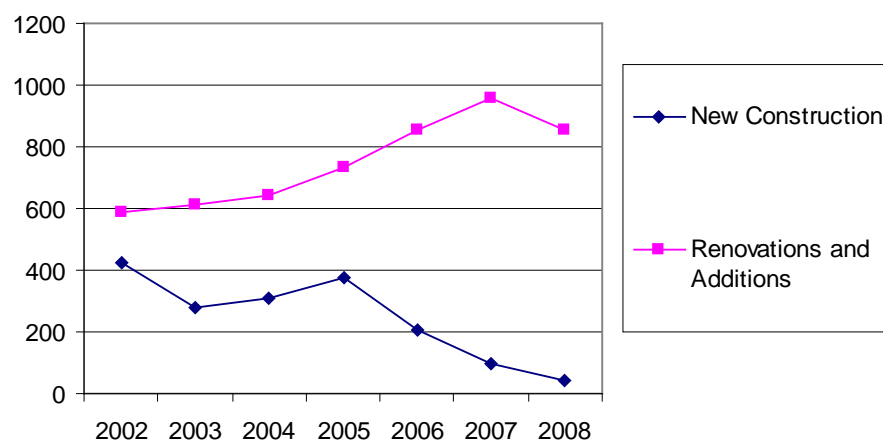
- Due to the physical characteristics of the Town, opportunity for growth and physical expansion from annexation is limited. However, there may be opportunities to annex more land located on the Island as well as crossing water bodies to other contiguous properties. It is important to consider annexation in order to appropriately plan for growth and development. An annexation process should be considered in order to ensure that growth is compatible with the character of the Island, establishing criteria which would maintain the character of the Town of Hilton Head Island.
- The calculations of each land use type indicate that there is slightly more than 10 percent of land available for development or inclusion in one of the other categories. Town policy leaders should use this analysis in determining the direction for future development and specifically redevelopment in conjunction with all of the information contained herein. More detailed analysis in the chapter and the other chapters will help determine whether or not the Town has an adequate amount of each classification to support its population, both permanent and seasonal.
- Remaining vacant land, totaling approximately 2,140 acres or 10 percent of the Hilton Head Island's land area, represents the remaining pool of land available for development. A major challenge for development will be to maintain the character of the Island while insuring adequate infrastructure is in place and balancing land conservation.

## 8.2 Building Permit Trends

In the analysis of building permit trends from January 2002 through November 2008 information was obtained using the building permit reports generated by the Inspections/Compliance Division of the Town of Hilton Head Island. The data indicates the number of permits obtained and is not necessarily indicative of permits that received a final certificate of occupancy during the same time period.

As illustrated in figure 8.2 renovations and additions for single family homes continued to increase in numbers until a slight decline from 960 to 856 permits from 2007 to 2008, whereas the number of permits for new construction has declined since 2005.

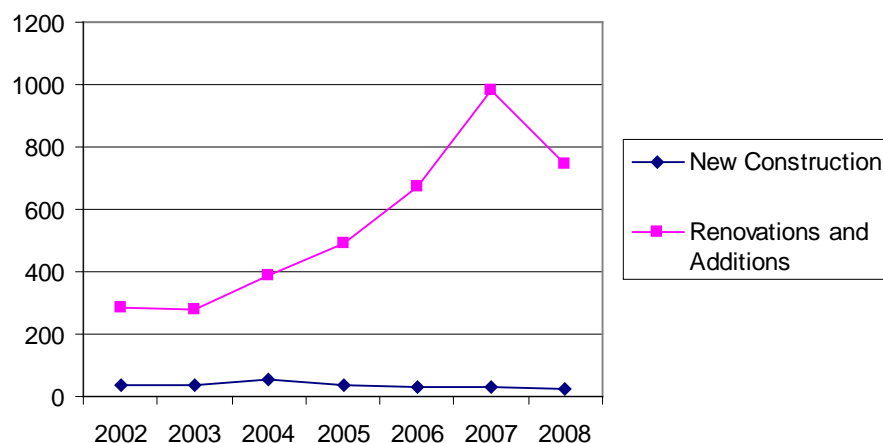
**Figure 8.2: Single Family Building Permits by Year**



Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, Building Code Division, 2008

The commercial and multi-family permits obtained during the same time period show a different trend. The number of permits obtained for renovations and additions is similar to that of the above single family permits, steadily and at times sharply increasing until a decline from 2007 to 2008; however, the number of permits for new construction has remained relatively steady, from 37 permits in 2002 to 25 permits in 2008. The graph below illustrates the commercial and multi-family building permit trends by year.

**Figure 8.3: Commercial and Multi-Family Building Permits by Year**



Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, Building Code Division, 2008

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Building permit data is indicative of several factors, one being the state of the economy as well as current building needs and growth in both residential and commercial types. The data indicates that there is currently a downward trend in the number of building permits issued by the Town. Redevelopment of our existing built environment and infill development should be a focus for the future development of our community, while the Town has entered a more mature level of development.

### 8.3 Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)

Planned Unit Developments, commonly referred to as either PUDs, or PD-1s, are communities that were master planned, mostly before the Town was incorporated. PUDs comprise land that was developed in a comprehensive, design-integrated manner according to an overall master plan. These communities are governed by the rules established in the adopted master plan. Often portions of the PUDs have gates that allow only property owners, residents, and invited guests to enter the community.

More than two-thirds of the land area of the Island is located in planned developments (70.7%). Existing land uses were classified and areas inside and outside PUDs were compared. The percentages indicated are the percentage of each land use within the planned developments (PUDs) and the area of the Island located outside of the PUDs. The residential land use category is the largest area for both areas and industrial is the least. The results of the land use category comparison are listed in Table 8.1.

**Table 8.1: Land Use Category Comparison**

Land Use Category	Acreage “INSIDE” the PUDs	Acreage “OUTSIDE” the PUDs
Commercial	325.6 (2.2%)	691.9(11.5%)
Industrial	.4 (.4%)	217.0 (3.6%)
Other	838.6 (5.8%)	1432.2 (23.9%)
Public and Civic	4990.4 (34.4%)	1645.0 (27.4%)
Residential	8310.1 (57.2%)	2018.5 (33.6%)
TOTALS	14465.1	6004.6

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, 2008

The percentage of each classification is indicated in the table below. The high percentage of the Island's total public and civic land use category is located behind the gates at 75% of the total area. Golf courses account for a high portion of this total and regardless of whether or not the course is private or public, it is classified as public and civic land use because on the master plans it is typically designated as open space and functions as a recreational land use. All golf courses, with the exception of miniature golf courses are located in the PUDs. As shown in Table 8.2, not quite one third of the Town's commercial acreage is located within the PUDs; however, more than two thirds (80.4%) of the total residential acreage is located within planned developments.

**Table 8.2: Land Use Categories within PUDs**

Land Use Category	Percentage of Island-wide Total within the PUDs
Commercial	32.0%
Industrial	19.9%
Other	36.9%
Public and Civic	75.2%
Residential	80.4%

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, 2008

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The location of each concentration of land use category and type is important to consider when determining infrastructure and other service needs, while also ensuring a high standard of quality of life. The location of the land uses within the PUDs as well as outside the PUDs has a direct relationship to the regulations or policies that we adopt as a Town depending on where they are applicable.

### 8.4 Existing Zoning Allocation

Table 8.3 below shows the break down of existing land use classifications within each zoning district. A description of each zoning classification can be found within the Town's Land Management Ordinance (LMO). The existing land use category that makes up the majority of each zoning classification represents the land uses that are permitted by right.

The RM-4 district, Low Density Residential, represents the largest area by zoning district at approximately 1,906 acres (other than the PD-1, Planned Development Mixed Use District. Residential uses account for 895 acres or 47 percent, while "other" acreage, which includes vacant and undeveloped properties account for 38 percent. This district represents the most acreage for residential uses, which is permitted by right within this zoning district.

The CC district, Commercial Center District, represents the most acreage for commercial uses, which is permitted by right in this district. The CC district is a total of 576 acres, with commercial uses accounting for 47 percent of the total acreage.

**Table 8.3: Land Use Classification by Zoning District**

Zoning District	Commercial Acreage	Residential Acreage	Public and Civic Acreage	Industrial Acreage	Other Acreage	TOTAL
CON	0.0	2.9	8.4	0.0	1.1	12.4
PR	0.0	0.0	337.3	0.0	175.9	513.2
RS-2	0.0	7.9	1.1	0.0	4.7	13.7
RS-3	0.0	101.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	109.3
RS-4	0.0	32.3	3.1	0.0	3.2	38.7
RS-5	0.3	156.7	4.6	0.0	36.9	198.5
RS-6	0.0	10.4	0.0	0.0	1.1	11.5
RM-4	12.8	895.3	246.9	18.4	732.5	1,905.9
RM-8	0.3	169.1	17.8	0.0	48.1	235.3
RM-12	0.0	71.2	0.0	0.0	7.0	78.2
PD-1	325.6	8,310.1	4,990.4	53.9	838.6	14,518.6
SMU	19.5	23.8	8.8	1.5	37.1	90.8
WMU	44.3	101.3	37.4	0.0	69.2	252.2
MMU	4.2	36.8	0.5	1.4	13.7	56.7
CFB	34.9	178.1	53.4	0.0	5.5	272.0
RD	12.2	110.4	0.1	0.8	14.5	138.1
NC	1.7	4.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	10.2
OL	74.4	0.0	49.3	6.2	43.7	173.7
OM	41.9	23.0	36.5	0.0	13.8	115.1
CC	270.7	32.9	162.9	23.8	85.6	575.9
CCW	32.9	0.0	6.2	0.0	9.2	48.3
DCW	21.0	0.0	2.6	6.3	2.6	32.4
IL	50.8	13.2	256.7	158.2	45.8	524.7
Total	947.5	10,280.6	6,224.0	270.6	2,202.5	19,925.3

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, 2008



## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Analysis of this table along with the nonconforming parcels should be looked at together in order to determine whether or not changes to the LMO and the permitted uses in each district are warranted. This information should also be used in the future planning for the location of supporting infrastructure and other uses.

### 8.5 Land Use Per Capita

An important land use analysis is the assessment of the amount of land use within each category and type compared to our population, both permanent and seasonal. This refers to the type of land use designated in each category per person. It is important in terms of sustainability and growth that this number balances to meet the Town's needs.

Based on population statistics in the Southern Beaufort Regional Plan and estimates calculated by the Town of Hilton Head Island's Community Development Department, the Town's population in 2008 was 40,697 persons. This does not include the 2.1 million visitors during this past year. It is also unknown how many people are living, visiting, or working on the Island during the busiest days. Visitor information is provided by the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- A fundamental policy of land use is whether or not the Town has sufficient land uses to support the population, both the permanent and seasonal population. It is also important that the portion of each land use classification is supported and sustainable in terms of infrastructure and natural resources to ensure a high quality of life that contributes to the character defining features of our community.

### 8.6 Build-out

Opportunities for expansion are constrained by the Town's physical characteristics. This directly affects build-out and new development opportunities. Vacant parcels were inventoried as part of the analysis of the existing land use. The parcels include land that does not have any visible improvements, and land with no buildings. Ownership was not included in the review and restrictive covenants and other factors that may limit development were not considered.

There are 2,140.5 acres of vacant parcels located within the Town. This comprises 10 percent of the total area of all parcels on the Island. Of this 10 percent, 65 percent or 746 acres of vacant or developable land is located in Planned Developments (PUDs).

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The amount of vacant land and population trends can be used to determine build-out, which may be defined as the highest level that the Island can sustain. The level that the community may want to sustain depends on several factors; therefore, determining a new established number for build-out in terms of building density is a complicated task. Because of the anticipation of build-out, creative redevelopment policies and alternatives to traditional zoning and land development regulations should be a focus for all land use policies and regulations.

## 8.7 Short Term Rental/Interval Occupancy Units or Timeshares

Interval occupancy units, or timeshares, create different traffic patterns than other uses that may seem similar, such as multi-family developments or other resort accommodations. This is due to the nature of their operation and function.

Based on 2007 data, there are 3,537 interval occupancy units Island-wide. Interval occupancy units are permitted within three zoning districts: WMU (Water Front Mixed Use), CFB (Central Forest Beach District) and RD (Resort Development). To maintain sustainable levels of traffic, it is important that the very specific land use of interval occupancy units is considered in the Town's policy decisions. This specific use is included in the existing land use classification of multi-family residential or hotel/motel.

### Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The location of permitted timeshares or interval occupancy units is important because it has a direct relationship on the transportation network and infrastructure of our Island. It is also important to analyze the impact that timeshares have on our economy and establishing a balance with our natural resources and preservation of our character.

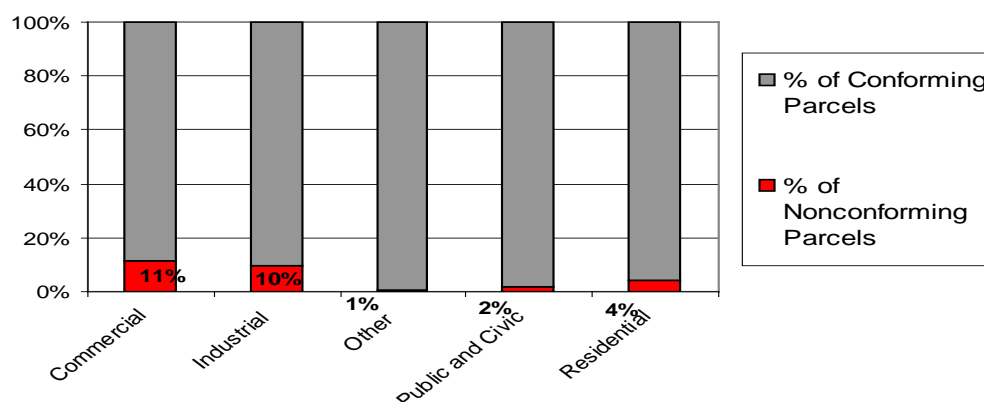
## 8.8 Nonconforming Parcels by Use

Parcels were determined as conforming based on the underlying zoning land use classification and the existing land use designation. Since parcels were classified based on the predominant use, the conforming status of each individual tenant was not determined.

The parcels that were designated as nonconforming also were not further researched to determine whether or not conditional permits or special exceptions were approved for the site. Only the land outside of the planned developments was analyzed. It is assumed that the PUDs are all conforming to their adopted master plans in terms of use.

Data gathered show 130 parcels are considered nonconforming by use. This is less than 1 percent of the total number of town-wide parcels (Figure 8.4). The bar graph below indicates the percentage of each land use that is considered nonconforming by use. The land use category with the highest percentage of nonconforming parcels is the existing land use of commercial. A map showing the location of the nonconforming parcels is attached as Figure 8.3.

**Figure 8.4: Percentage of Non-Conforming Parcels by Type**



Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, 2008

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Current zoning classifications should be reviewed along with the associated regulations for each use. Areas that have high instances of nonconforming uses should be reviewed closely and revisions should be made where necessary. Creative alternatives to traditional zoning classifications should be considered, such as form based and smart codes to reflect current building and development trends that are indicative of our Island character.

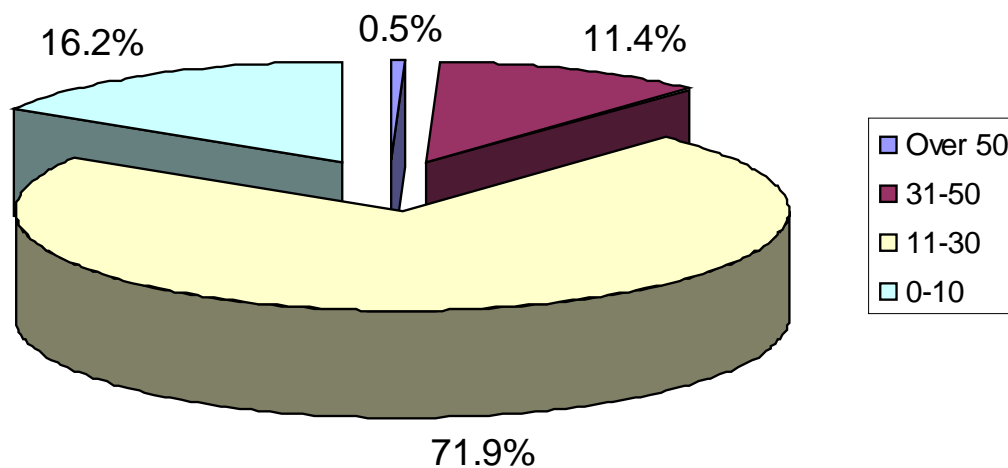
### 8.9 Age of Structures

The specific age of the built structures is not necessarily a specific land use; however, it is something that is associated with the underlying land use and is integral in determining areas that are prime for redevelopment. Older structures that were built to different regulations are more vulnerable to stresses to the built environment, such as flooding and wind damage.

The age of structures was determined using information maintained by Beaufort County records. Parcels with multiple units built at various times were classified using the oldest building date. The units used for this non-residential analysis are parcel units which is the equivalent of one individually owned unit (one individually owned building or one individually owned unit in a multi-unit building). Residential parcel units are considered the equivalent of one living unit for the purposes of this analysis.

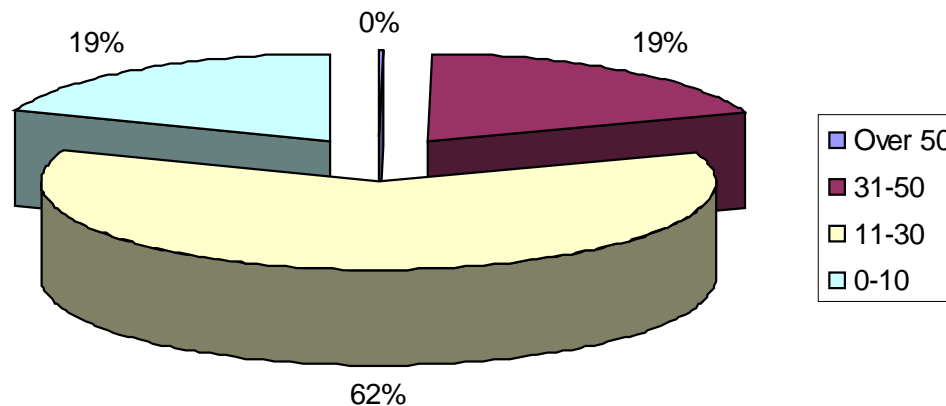
71.9 percent, or 2,405 of the Town's non-residential parcels contain structures in the 11-30 year age category, while less than 1 percent (16 parcels units) are over 50 years old. This is illustrated in the Figure 8.5, Age of Non-Residential Structures.

**Figure 8.5: Age of Non-Residential Structures**



Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, 2008

Most of the residential structures are in the 11-30 year age bracket at 62 percent (17,956 parcel units) of total parcel units. Only 0.2 percent, or 16 units, are over 50 years old. This is illustrated in the Figure 8.6, Age of Residential Structures.

**Figure 8.6: Age of Residential Structures**

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Department, 2008

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The location of the older developments should be reviewed to determine the areas that may be primed for redevelopment. Changes in building codes, building trends, and consumer expectations should also be considered when determining the appropriate age of structures to target redevelopment strategies.

## 8.10 Zoning Changes

When development patterns change, often amendments to the zoning map are initiated either by the property owner or developer or sometimes by the Town.

Within a four year time frame, 2004-2008, there were 14 zoning map amendments (changes to the zoning districts) which changed the permitted uses of the parcels or the permitted density. A review of the location and concentrations for requests for zoning changes may result in policy changes to the text in the Land Management Ordinance or to the zoning map.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Reviewing the background information as well as analyzing the trends will guide future zoning changes, whether the changes are map amendments or text changes to the requirements for each district. Future land use decisions and requests for zoning changes will be determined using the background information contained in this plan as well as the future land use map, currently represented by the Town's Official Zoning Map.
- Future land use maps for the Town of Hilton Head Island may be developed using the information from the analysis of the existing land use, information from the public meetings and surveys as well as the analysis from the other elements of this plan. The best available data should be used in hazard mitigation practices, particularly the relocation of critical service facilities. Green infrastructure and compact development practices should also be considered for all future land use changes. Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) is another creative tool that should be considered in order to focus development in the most appropriate and suitable locations to ensure the sustainability of our Town.

## 8.11 Goals and Implementation Strategies

Hilton Head Island's future land use goals, which are included in the implications stated above, the key issues goals and implementation strategies, represent those of a more maturely developed community and therefore address issues of infill development, redevelopment and the build out of the island's remaining vacant parcels. The plan emphasizes the sustainability of the balance of land uses; the balance of human activity and the natural environment; and the balance between land uses and public infrastructure and services.

There are six land use goals in the Town's Plan:

1. Insure that future land uses do not adversely impact the environment through better oversight in the placement of structures in environmentally sensitive areas and through better stormwater management techniques.
2. Identify an acceptable level of future development that does not overtax the areas natural environment and infrastructure. This can be done by monitoring allowable densities and by continuing to purchase lands that would adversely impact the island if developed.
3. Balance the demand for recreation and the environmental health of the waterways.
4. Promote quality infill development and use redevelopment opportunities to promote more pedestrian friendly retail environments.
5. Provide better emergency preparedness and reduce vulnerability based on the utility of land.
6. Encourage continual intergovernmental cooperation on regional land use issues. The land use element specifically calls for the participation in the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan.

## Goals

### 8.1 Existing Land Use

- A. The goal is to have an appropriate mix of land uses to meet the needs of existing and future populations.
- B. The goal is to maintain the character of the Island while insuring adequate infrastructure is in place and balancing land conservation to meet future needs.
- C. The goal is to encourage development to reflect the character of Hilton Head Island for lands adjacent to existing Town limits, including the bridge.

### 8.2 Building Permit Trends

- A. The goal is to monitor trends of issued building permit data in order to respond to development trends and community needs.

### 8.3 Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)

- A. The goal is to provide flexibility for the PUDs as future policies, regulations and requirements are adopted Town-wide.
- B. The goal is to an appropriate mix of land uses to accommodate permanent and seasonal populations and existing market demands is important to sustain the Town's high quality of life and should be considered when amending PUD Master Plans.

### 8.4 Existing Zoning Allocation

- A. An appropriate mix of land uses to accommodate permanent and seasonal populations and existing market demands is important to sustain the Town's high quality of life and should be considered when amending the Town's Official Zoning Map.

### 8.5 Land Use Per Capita

- A. The goal is to have an appropriate mix and availability of land uses to meet the needs of existing and future populations.

### **8.6 Build-out**

- A. The goal is to monitor land use consumption and conversion rates to maintain a proper balance of public infrastructure, private development, and land conservation.
- B. The goal is to consider develop regulations and requirements to maintain the Island character and meet the needs of the community as it approaches build out.

### **8.7 Short Term Rental/Interval Occupancy Units or Timeshares**

- A. The goal is to maintain an inventory of Short Term Rentals, Interval Occupancy Units, or Timeshares.
- B. The goal is to encourage Short Term Rentals, Interval Occupancy Units, or Timeshares to locate and/or redevelop in areas that have available supporting infrastructure.

### **8.8 Nonconforming Parcels by Use**

- A. The goal is to monitor non-conforming uses and consider flexible regulations for redevelopment.
- B. The goal is to evaluate the locations of non-conforming uses to determine areas to consider for Zoning Map Amendments.

### **8.9 Age of Structures**

- A. The goal is to monitor areas that have high concentrations of aging structures to target for potential redevelopment.
- B. The goal is to encourage redevelopment of properties with aging structures or that no longer meet current market demands.

### **8.10 Zoning Changes**

- A. The goal is to provide appropriate modifications to the Zoning designations to meet market demands while maintaining the character of the Island.

## **Implementation Strategies**

### **8.1 Existing Land Use**

- A. Evaluate annexation beyond the physical boundaries of the Island and should take into consideration purposes other than physical growth, such as regulation of the bridge and land beyond the existing municipal boundaries.
- B. Draft a “Town owned property master plan” that identifies the details of the Town’s Land Acquisition Program and identifies policy on the potential uses of the property. This plan should include criteria to prioritize land for future purchases.

### **8.2 Building Permit Trends**

- A. Develop a building permit report at regular intervals to allow the Town to adjust to development trends and meet customer service needs.

### **8.3 Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)**

- A. Provide flexibility within the PUDs to address appropriate commercial or service land uses in areas with a high residential concentration.

### **8.4 Existing Zoning Allocation**

- A. Determine if there is an adequate amount and location of current zoning districts through review of existing zoning district classifications.
- B. Develop and consider implementing alternatives to traditional zoning classifications, such as Form Based Codes or Smart Code.
- C. Evaluate land use consumption rates using the best available data, including building trends, to monitor future build-out and determine an appropriate zoning mix.



- D. Evaluate the use of Neighborhood Commercial and Mixed Uses developments, both inside and outside PUDs.
- E. Review use designations within each zoning category should be conducted to determine if there is adequate supply and a suitable mix to meet community build-out needs.

### **8.5 Land Use Per Capita**

- A. Monitor land use demands based upon existing and projected demographics for the Town.

### **8.6 Build-out**

- A. Provide flexibility within the Land Management Ordinance to address future development and redevelopment of existing sites. Areas of existing and future redevelopment should be reviewed and identified and additional TIF (Tax Increment Finance) districts considered.
- B. Evaluate a Transfer of Development Rights program to guide development to appropriate locations and areas within the Town.

### **8.7 Short Term Rental/Interval Occupancy Units or Timeshares**

- A. Provide flexibility to upgrade and maintain inventory of Short Term Rental/Interval Occupancy Units or Timeshares to allow for redevelopment to meet market demands and eliminate functional obsolescence.
- B. Direct Short Term Rental/Interval Occupancy Units or Timeshares to areas that have adequate infrastructure in place to meet service demands.

### **8.8 Nonconforming Parcels by Use**

- A. Evaluate the zoning districts or regulations of the districts when high concentrations of non-conforming properties by use exist to determine if amendments are appropriate.

### **8.9 Age of Structures**

- A. Target areas for redevelopment using information such as age of structure and assisting with reducing the vulnerability of structures to storms and natural disaster events due to non compliance to current building codes.
- B. Develop flexible regulations and incentives to encourage redevelopment of aging structures and districts.

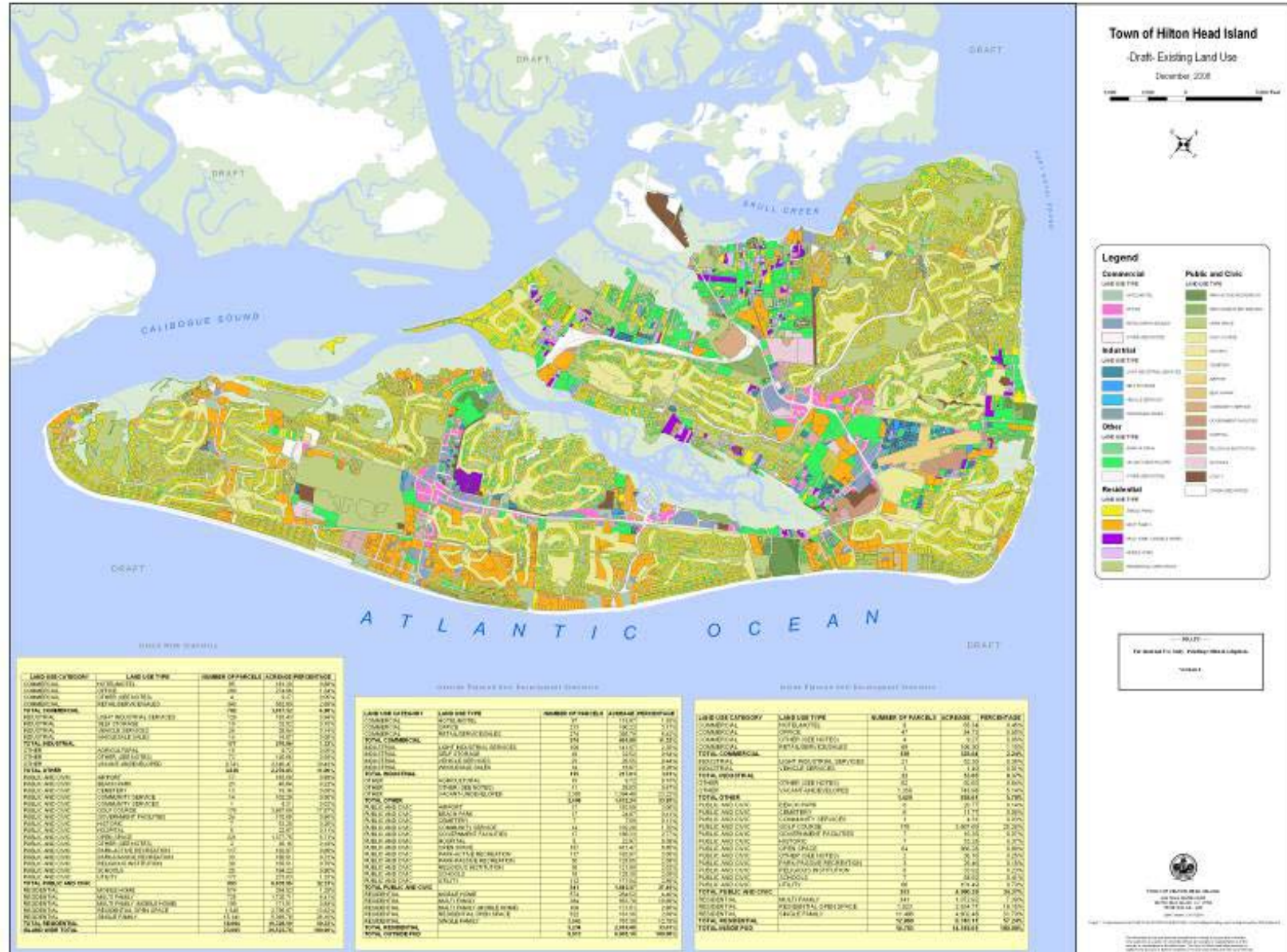
### **8.10 Zoning Changes**

- A. Review the appropriate locations of certain land uses in critical areas such as headlands, velocity zones, airport overlay, critical line for storm and the dune accretion zone.
- B. Focus higher intensity land uses in areas with available sewer connections.

**Figure 8.1: Hilton Head Island Town Limits**

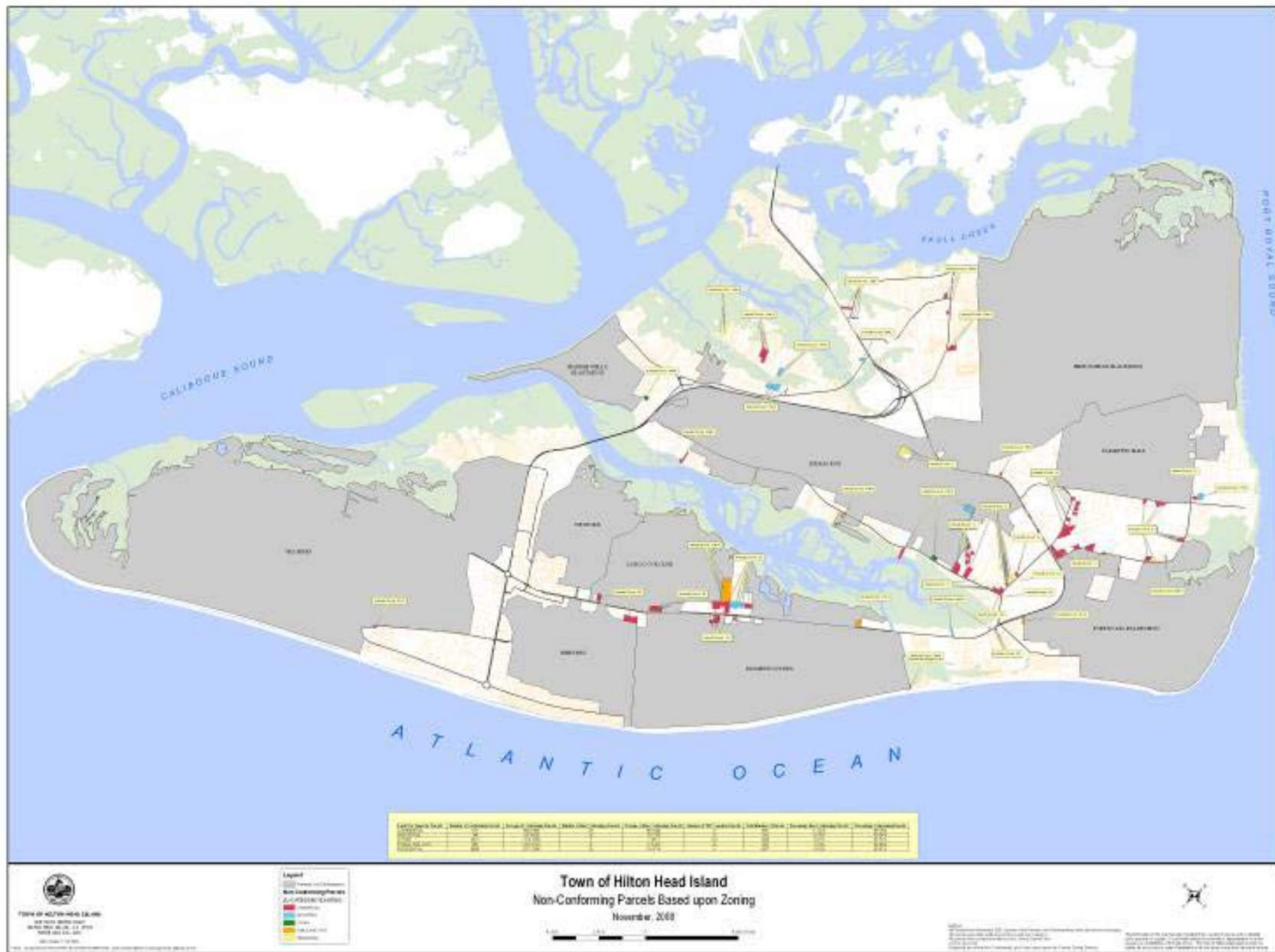


### Figure 8.2: Existing land Use





**Figure 8.3: Nonconforming Parcels Based on Current Zoning**



## 9 Transportation

*To provide a safe, efficient, environmentally sound, aesthetically sensitive, and fiscally responsible transportation system which is integrated into the regional network to enhance the quality of life for those living in, employed in, and visiting Hilton Head Island.*

### Introduction

This element is intended to be a general guide for the growth and development of the community's transportation system. It recommends policies that encourage appropriate land use development, facilitate mobility and public safety, reduce infrastructure costs, preserve environmentally sensitive lands, and enhance the aesthetic quality and economic viability of existing neighborhoods and communities.

Hilton Head Island has developed into a nationally and internationally known premier resort and retirement community. The appeal of the Island to retirees, visitors, and permanent residents is a very favorable climate, environmental attractiveness and perceived sensitivity to environmental preservation with public controls on growth to preserve natural attractiveness, coupled with high quality amenities and infrastructure.

The central issue now is how to sustain this economic system as the Town transitions from a successful growth phase to relative maturity while preserving the natural settings, fragile ecology, amenities and infrastructure that will continue to attract and retain retirees and tourists.

The Transportation Element will discuss issues raised in connection with growth, ecology, amenities and infrastructure and present some potential strategies thought necessary for consideration by the Town. The Transportation Element includes an inventory and analysis of all multimodal components including, roads, pathways, water and air transportation, as well as, public and quasi-private transit.

### 9.1 Road Network

Roadway access to the Island is provided by Highway U.S. 278 over two toll-free bridges, J. Wilton Graves Bridge and Karl Bowers Bridge. William Hilton Parkway (US 278 Business) and the Cross Island Parkway (US 278) serve as the Island's two primary roadways. The Charles E. Fraser Bridge spans across Broad Creek to connect the Cross Island Parkway with William Hilton Parkway on the south end of the Island. All other roads connect into these roads, making them the critical link for local residential, business and recreational areas. The Island's road network consists of 385 roadway miles, including 8.5 miles of Town owned roads, 21 miles of County owned roads, 73 miles of State owned roads, and 282.5 miles of privately owned roads, which are mostly located within the Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

Alternate transportation routes provide a viable alternative to utilizing main roads on the Island. These routes allow traffic to be calmed, and relieve congestion from major roads, especially William Hilton Parkway. One such route that has been successful is the combination of Pembroke Drive, Gardner Drive, Leg O'Mutton Road, Marshland Road, and Mathews Drive, which provides an alternate route to William Hilton Parkway. The Town of Hilton Head Island worked closely with Indigo Run to develop this alternate system of roads. This alternate road system is especially helpful because it serves as direct access to the commercial and residential development fronting William Hilton Parkway at Indigo Run. It also serves as an alternate link between the Indigo Run area and the Marshland Road, Mathews Drive and Folly Field areas to the south. Main Street is an example of a well-planned, privately-owned road that provides direct access to commercial businesses with frontage on William Hilton Parkway. Although Main Street functions well as an aesthetically pleasing access road, many sections lack sidewalks or multi-use pathways.

The Town has designated its public streets in a hierarchy ranked by design and function. The street hierarchy is defined by road function and average daily traffic (ADT). The design standards are required by the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) and are shown in Table 9.1, Street Standards.

**Table 9.1: Street Standards**

Street type	Maximum ADT	Minimum Pavement Width (feet)	Minimum Shoulder Width (feet)	Minimum Right-of-Way (feet)
Lane	50	20	4	30
Cul-de-sac	250/500	20	4/8	40/50
Local Access	2,000	22	8	50
Sub-Collector	4,000	24	8	60
Collector	6,000	24	10	70
Minor Arterial	25,000	24	10	70
Major Arterial	50,000	24	12	120

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Land Management Ordinance, 2009

The Town has installed mile markers along William Hilton Parkway (US 278 Business) to assist motorists with identifying their location for emergency purposes as well as to locate businesses along the route. This program has proven to be very successful as businesses are now advertising their location in relation to the markers.

The State of South Carolina has ownership of all the major arterials, and most of the minor arterial roads on the Island. The Island's business development exists mainly along William Hilton Parkway (US 278 Business) and the other State-owned arterial and minor arterial roads. Roads such as Pembroke Drive and New Orleans Road are County owned roads with dense commercial development. Table 9.2, State Owned Roads, lists the state owned roads on Hilton Head Island.

Residential, and some resort-related development, exist along smaller County-owned roads and private roads. Most of the roads (287 miles) within the incorporated boundary of the Town of Hilton Head Island are privately owned and maintained by the PUDs. The majority of these are streets within residential developments. Table 9.3, County Owned Roads, lists the Island roads owned by Beaufort County. Table 9.4, Town Owned Roads, lists the limited number of roads owned by the Town.

The Town's current policy is to transfer all Town-owned roads to the County for ownership and maintenance. While this policy is in place, the County's ability to accept new roads is limited due to funding capacities. On selected roads the Town retains some road maintenance responsibilities following transfer of ownership. These responsibilities may include landscape, litter control and beautification projects. In most recent years the issue of road ownership and maintenance has been a concern for the Town. Some privately owned roads or driveways that provide access to multiple residences are not adequately maintained. Roadways that are unpaved can cause damage to vehicles and stormwater systems. Often there are also public safety concerns. In 2003, the Town began evaluating the benefits of developing a program through which the Town would acquire rights of way and private roads under the Storm Water Utility Program to maintain and improve drainage, to facilitate future paving and to facilitate the future extension of other services, such as sewer, electric, phone and cable utilities. Ultimately the roads would be transferred to the County for continued maintenance and ownership. The first two roads identified for acquisition under the pilot program were Ned Court and Jessica Drive. These roads were subsequently acquired by the Town, general improvements were made and the roads were turned over to the County for future paving. Both roads are now in Beaufort County's road paving program.

Beaufort County's road paving program operates on a four year cycle and is funded by State gas tax revenues; approximately \$1.5 Million annually. Only County-owned roads that have dedicated rights-of-way are considered for paving, which is one major benefit of the Town assembling the rights of way for substandard roads on the Island. The criteria used for ranking roads in the County's program include, but are not limited to, the number of residences served, pre-existing maintenance demand and the cost of paving the road.



Within in the Town, the unpaved, County-maintained portion of Fish Haul Road has been included in the County's upcoming four-year paving program. Ned Court and Jessica Drive have been included for paving in this cycle as well on an as-funds-become-available basis. Following that, the highest rated roads under the County's rating system are Allen Road, Ferguson's Lane, Gibson Road, and Wright Place, although none of were rated high enough to be included in the upcoming four-year paving program.

**Table 9.2: State Owned Roads on Hilton Head Island**

Street Name	Street Name
Archer Road	Point Comfort Circle
Arrow Rd. (Pal. Bay to Helmsman)	Point Comfort Road
Arrow Rd. (Archer to WHP)	Pope Avenue
Avocet Road	Pope Avenue Exec. Park Rd
Baygall Road	Power Alley
Beach City Rd(Mathews-The Spa)	Row Boat Road
Bittern Rd. (Lagoon to NFB Dr)	Sand Dollar Rd(Seahorse to end)
Blue Heron Point Road	Sea Horse Way
Bradley Beach Road	Sea Olive Road
Camellia Street	Singleton Beach Road
Cordillo Parkway	South Forest Beach Drive
Sol Blatt Jr. Cross Is. Pkwy.	Spanish Wells Road
Deallyon Avenue	Squire Pope Road
Dillon Road	Squiresgate Road
Dune Lane (Ibis to Jacana)	Target Road
Dunnagans Alley(Palmetto Bay to Arrow)	Union Cemetery Road
Fish Haul Road (paved)	Wilborn Rd (WHP to School Rd)
Folly Field Rd (WHP to Starfish)	Wild Horse Road
Folly Field Rd(Starfish-Isl.Bch.Pk.)	Wm Hilton Pkwy (XIP to SP Cir)
Gardenia Street	Wm Hilton Pkwy (Bridge to XIP)
Genesta Street	Woodhaven Drive
Ghost Crab Way	Woodhaven Lane
Gum Tree Road	Pope Avenue
Helmsman Way	Pope Avenue Exec. Park Rd
Ibis Street (Lagoon to NFB Dr.)	Power Alley
Jacana Street	Row Boat Road
Jenkins Road	Sand Dollar Rd(Seahorse to end)
Kings Court	Sea Horse Way
Lagoon Road	Sea Olive Road
Marshland Road	Singleton Beach Road
Mathews Drive	South Forest Beach Drive
Mimosa Street	Spanish Wells Road
Mitchellville Road (paved)	Squire Pope Road
Moonshell Road	Squiresgate Road
Nautilus Road	Target Road
North Forest Beach Drive	Union Cemetery Road
Office Way	Wilborn Rd (WHP to School Rd)
Old Wild Horse Road	Wild Horse Road
Oleander Street	Wm Hilton Pkwy (XIP to SP Cir)
Paddleboat Lane	Wm Hilton Pkwy (Bridge to XIP)
Palmetto Bay Road	Woodhaven Drive
Periwinkle Lane	Woodhaven Lane

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island

**Table 9.3: County Owned Roads on Hilton Head Island**

Street Name	Street Name
Arrow Rd. (WHP to New Orleans)	Jessica Drive
Augusta Lane	Jonesville Road
Avocet Road	Katie Miller Road
Bay Pines Drive	Leg O' Mutton Road
Bay Pines Road	Marblehead Road
Beach City Road (WHP to Mathews)	Marshland Lane
Ben White Drive	Mitchellville Rd (unpaved)
Bittern Street (NFB Dr to Dune)	Muddy Creek Road
Bluebell Lane	Murray Avenue
Bow Circle	Mystic Drive
Bradley Circle	Namon Road
Bryant Road	Natures Way (Pembroke to Augusta)
Burkes Beach Road	Ned Court
Cardinal Road	New Orleans Road
Caesar Place	Northridge Drive
Chisholm Place	Oak Marsh Drive
Corpus Christie	Oakview Road
Curlew Road	Otter Hole Lane
Dianah's Drive	Palmetto Bay Business Park
Dove Street	Palmetto Parkway
Dune Lane (except Ibis to Jacana)	Park Road
Eagin Court	Pembroke Drive
Egret Street	Pensacola Place
Elizabeth Road	Rebecca Circle
Ferguson's Lane	Saint Augustine Place
First Street	Sand Dollar Rd(Starfish to Sea Horse)
Fish Haul Road (unpaved)	Second Street
Flamingo Street	Shamrock Circle
Gannet Street	Simmons Road
Gardner Drive	Southwood Park Drive
Heron Street	Starfish Drive
Hunter Road	Thomas Cohen Drive
Indian Trail	Wexford Drive (from WHP to Circle)
Island Drive	

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island

**Table 9.4: Town Owned Roads on Hilton Head Island**

Street Name	Street Name
Alex Patterson Road	Kingbird Lane
Arrow Rd. (Helmsman to Archer)	Lemoyne Avenue
Automobile Place	MacDonough Lane (100' E. of Gumtree)
Bobwhite Lane	Mallard Street (n. of N. Forest Bch. Dr.)
Castnet Drive	Mingo Way
Chamberlin Drive	Myrtle Lane
Cooperative Way	Nassau Street (private w/in Circle Center)
Dunnagans Alley (Arrow to Wexford)	Nature's Way
Electric Avenue	Oak Park Drive
Firethorn Lane	Office Park Road
Haig Point Circle	Pelican Street (n. of N. Forest Bch. Dr.)
Hickory Lane	Sandpiper Street (n. of N. Forest Bch Dr)
Hiltech Drive	Summit Drive
Humane Way	Tanglewood Drive
Indigo Run Drive (WHP to Pembroke)	Thompson Street
Jacana Street (n. of N. Forest Bch. Dr.)	Wild Horse Road (WHP to Old WH Rd)
Jarvis Park Road	

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island

### **Island Intersection Design**

In 1996, Town Council passed a resolution stating that roundabout designs should be considered as an alternative to conventional, cross-type intersections within the Town as opportunities presented themselves as a result of new highway construction or reconstruction. At that time, roundabouts were little used in South Carolina outside of Hilton Head Island. In the interim, the South Carolina Department of Transportation and various local governments throughout the State have been constructing roundabout intersections with increasing frequency.

Modern roundabouts employ different design characteristics over older traffic circles, which are often found in central business districts of cities and towns. Traffic circles have street approaches that enter at right angles, may be controlled by traffic signals, may have on-street parking, and are often large enough to accommodate pedestrian features and points of interest in the interior of the circle. Roundabouts have street approaches that flare and intersect the circulating roadway at an acute angle, are controlled by “YIELD” signs, route pedestrians and cyclists around the exterior of the roundabout only, and are smaller. Both modern roundabouts and older traffic circles are grouped together under the category of “rotary” intersections.

Roundabouts may employ a single circulating lane of travel or multiple circulating lanes. The Town has modified both Sea Pines Circle and Coligny Circle in recent years from a multi-lane roundabout to a single lane roundabout in order to simplify operations. Some roundabouts on the island, including Coligny Circle, have a single lane of travel that circulates all of the way around the interior island, but have multiple lanes in one or more of the roundabout's quadrants. The roundabouts at the intersections of Whooping Crane Way with Main Street, Indigo Run Drive with Pembroke Drive and Leg O'Mutton Road are of this variety. Some single lane roundabouts, including Sea Pines Circle and the one at Squire Pope Road and Gum Tree Road, have bypass, or “slip” lanes to allow right-turning motorists to bypass the circulating roadway altogether.

The Town has twenty-two traffic signals, with all of them located on the major arterials William Hilton Parkway, Palmetto Bay Road, or Pope Avenue. The Town has successfully avoided the installation of any traffic signals on any other roads, partially through the use of rotary intersections as a viable alternative to building turn lanes and placing traffic signals. Examples of intersections that could have been signalized are Squire Pope Road/Gum Tree Road and Mathews Drive/Woodlake Villas intersections. The Town is currently designing roundabout intersections at Arrow Road/Dunnagans Alley, Mathews Drive/Beach City Road, and Mathews Drive/Marshland Road in order to avoid the need to introduce traffic signals at these intersections.

Roundabout intersections afford distinct advantages in many instances over more conventional signalized cross-type intersections. The first advantage is that, while landscaping accommodated by roundabouts requires ongoing maintenance, they do not generate the initial and recurring costs associated with a traffic signal installation. They tend to operate more safely with a reduced collision frequency that is typically made up primarily of low-speed rear-end or side swipe collisions as opposed to the high-speed right-angle collisions that tend to result from the motorists disregarding a red traffic signal. The intersection of Squire Pope Road with Gum Tree Road, for instance, formerly one of the most high-frequency collision locations within the Town, has not experienced a reported vehicle collision since the construction of a roundabout in April of 2008. Sea Pines Circle and Coligny Circle both experienced collision frequency decreases of approximately 30% or more following their redesign to incorporate design features of a modern roundabout in recent years. Roundabouts afford a large area for beautification for aesthetic purposes, and usually result in reduced average delay to motorists. Motorists may experience long delays at a traffic signal when they encounter a red signal and must await a green one, but roundabouts tend to spread out the delay more evenly between motorists, usually insuring that everyone experiences a smaller and more equitable amount of delay. Roundabouts designs tend to decrease the length of pedestrian crosswalks, making pedestrian movements safer and reducing travel speeds of motorists passing through the intersection. Unlike traffic signals, they generally do not require reconstruction following a catastrophic weather event or other disaster, and do not require electrical service to control traffic.

Roundabouts have some disadvantages when compared with conventional signalized intersections. They generally are more costly to construct, and may cost a million dollars or more compared to a typical conventional intersection improvement and signalization that may cost half of that. They typically require more area to construct than a more conventional intersection, and the need to acquire right-of-way necessary for their construction can further drive up costs. Some motorists remain unused to roundabout control and resist it, avoiding roundabout intersections when alternate routes are available.

There are at least a dozen rotary intersections on Hilton Head Island, with at least four more in some stage of planning or design. The high profile Sea Pines Circle and Coligny Circle intersections are high-volume junctions that serve as transportation hubs in their respective areas. Hilton Head Island has become somewhat noteworthy for its number of rotary intersections and roundabouts, and is often cited as a source for information on their planning, design and operation.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The Town owns less than 2% of the roads on the Island and has limited authority to maintain or service roads it does not own. Coordination with the County, State and PUDs to ensure proper safety and road maintenance is important on the nearly 98% of roads not owned by the Town.
- Continued coordination with South Carolina Department of Transportation and Beaufort County to maintain the current capacity of William Hilton Parkway and other arterials by controlling access points and median crossing locations, improving intersections, adding deceleration lanes, optimizing the synchronized traffic lights with the mainland's system and investigating other methods of traffic management and development control is recommended.
- Alternative connections to alleviate traffic from William Hilton Parkway should continue to be considered.
- The bridges onto the Island are critical public facilities that provide the only vehicular access for residents and visitors to the Island, as well as the only ground transportation link for emergency evacuations. Protection of these critical facilities should be a priority.
- The Town's use of roundabouts rather than conventional signalized intersections has strengthened its identity and differentiated the Island from many other communities. The character of the Island as a unique residential and resort destination is enhanced by limiting typical street intersection design. The use of roundabouts should be continued, keeping in mind, public safety, reduced impact on natural resources and financial considerations.
- The Town enjoys a positive reputation for the high quality of maintenance along its roadways. This should be considered as additional development or redevelopment is proposed. Protection of aesthetics and natural character of the Town's main arterials has been and should continue to be a priority. With this in mind streetscapes should be used to establish character for redevelopment areas, recreation or activity centers, pedestrian oriented areas and gateways to the Island.
- The County requires that roads improvements made with the intension of conveying ownership and maintenance to the County be constructed to approved standards. In addition, the County has limited capacity to accept additional roads into its maintenance program. Alternative standards, including different materials used in road building may provide a means to improve existing substandard roads, reduce impervious surfaces and enhance fire and rescue access.

## 9.2 Traffic Volumes and Trends

In order to evaluate traffic volumes and trends and to propose improvements, each year a Traffic Monitoring and Evaluation Report is prepared for the Island. The Land Management Ordinance requires this report, which is presented to the Planning Commission and Town Council. Recommendations from this report are incorporated into the annual revised Capital Needs Assessment Program, which is then used to develop the Capital Improvements Program. The report provides traffic volumes and pertinent data on the following subjects:

- Yearly June peak hour traffic counts for all signalized intersections.
- Daily traffic counts for other major arterials.
- A description of operating conditions relative to the Town's adopted traffic service goals for selected signalized intersections.
- Proposed improvements to resolve intersections not meeting the Town's traffic goals.
- Peak hour counts at Sea Pines Circle for years divisible by five.

### **Island Trends**

The opening of the Cross Island Parkway brought major changes to the traffic patterns on Hilton Head Island, as is evidenced by the changes in traffic volumes at various points around the Island. After the opening of the Cross Island Parkway in 1998, the vehicle counts dropped on William Hilton Parkway at most monitoring locations while it increased at some south end locations, such as Palmetto Bay Road. The net effect has been positive. Long traffic backups on William Hilton Parkway at the approach to Sea Pines Circle and backups in other north end locations on William Hilton Parkway have been minimized to a large degree. Locations that had both pre-and post- Cross Island Parkway counts were compared and except one on Pope Avenue had significant declines in volumes.

Traffic counts are also monitored along US 278 at the J. Wilton Graves Bridge to the mainland, at the Town line. The first count taken at this location was in 1998, when the volume was 49,693 vehicles. The counts were significantly higher in 2006 at 62,855 and have since leveled back at roughly 53,000 to 54,000 in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

Much of the Island's traffic merges at the Sea Pines Circle. Traffic diverted off of William Hilton Parkway onto Cross Island Parkway still flows through this main juncture. Redesigned in 2001, the Sea Pines Circle works well to lower vehicle speeds and move high volumes of traffic, and it is considered to be a cultural landmark by the community. Improvements to roadways in the area which offer alternative routes around Sea Pines Circle have been suggested to mitigate volumes on the circle.

A decade after the opening of the Cross Island Parkway, new development is still occurring on the Island, and redevelopment is becoming more likely. It appears that traffic volumes have leveled off and may continue to slowly increase on the Island over time. It should be noted, however, that average daily traffic volumes are increasing at different rates in different areas.

Permanent traffic counters were installed by the State at four strategic locations after 1991. These counters provide continuous real time traffic volume data and allow Town staff to examine traffic volumes for any time period of any day throughout the year. This provides accurate and timely data for the yearly Traffic Monitoring and Evaluation Report and helps with periodic reports regarding traffic volumes. This permits the Town staff, the Planning Commission and Town Council to stay informed about the status of the Island's road system.

These permanent counters are all located on William Hilton Parkway. The first is between Wilborn Road and Pembroke Drive, the second is between Beach City Road and Palmetto Parkway, the third is at the north side of the bridge north of Queens Folly Road and the fourth is just north of Park Lane.

Table 9.5 provides an inventory of traffic counts taken at the traffic count stations each year. While the Town has seen an increase in traffic volume through the late 1990s and early 2000s, traffic volumes have leveled off to relatively constant numbers.

**Table 9.5: 24-Hour Bi-Directional Traffic Demand – June 2004-2009**

Station #	Location	Pre Cross Island Pkwy 1997	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change/ Year
1	Wm. Hilton Pkwy. at J. Wilton Graves Br.		54,769	52,769	62,855	57,524	53,479	53,949	-0.3
2	Wm. Hilton Pkwy. west of Cross Is. Pkwy.		51,436	52,769	54,445	51,054	50,066	53,971	1.0
3	Wm. Hilton Pkwy. east of Whooping Crane	54,100	50,217	49,348	48,404	45,934	44,848	46,600	-1.5
4	Wm. Hilton Pkwy. east of Coggins Pt. Rd.	44,200	34,769	35,193	34,275	32,143	34,535	32,231	-1.5
5	Wm. Hilton Pkwy. west of Queens Folly Rd.	50,700	42,302	43,818	43,029	40,671	37,888	39,856	-1.2
6	Wm. Hilton Pkwy. west of Arrow Rd.	45,200	34,142	33,912	32,026	30,350	28,585	30,940	-2.0
7	Pope Ave. south of New Orleans Rd.	35,200	35,336	37,306	33,817	32,007	29,991	29,990	-3.2
8	Palmetto Bay Rd. south of Pt. Comfort Rd.		24,336	25,852	24,716	24,795	23,870	23,558	-0.6
9	Sol Blatt Jr. XIP south of W. Hilton Pkwy.		12,481	15,524	15,495	16,230	17,717	13,904	2.2
10	Sol Blatt Jr. Cross-Is. at Toll Plaza		22,803	26,215	24,740	26,241	23,793	24,339	1.3

Town-Wide Rate of Change – 2007-2008 = - 3.4 % \*

Town-Wide Rate of Change – 2008-2009 = + 1.3 % \*

Effective Town-Wide Annual Rate of Change – 2004-2009 = - 0.7 % \*

\*All three rates based exclusively on data in Table One

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Future traffic volumes may exceed the capacity of the Town's road network impacting both the efficiency and safety of the Island's roads. Improvements to the road network that include safe and convenient access and interconnections to all areas of the Island that still protect community investments, neighborhoods and the natural environment should be considered.
- Continued monitoring and review of the Town's traffic analysis standards should be conducted in accordance with existing and future needs of the Town.



### 9.3 Traffic Planning on the Island

The current Town traffic model has divided the Island into 69 Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ). These zones are used in a computerized traffic model to analyze build-out scenarios and identify potential roadway improvements needed in the future. Each zone encompasses an area which feeds vehicles into the road network at one or two road locations.

The Town's work with traffic models has evolved from one traffic model to another, each building on the previous model's assumptions and results. All of these traffic model runs have served, currently serve, and will continue to serve to identify roadway improvements and capital improvement projects.

The traffic models are based on land use information within each TAZ. A "most likely build-out" concept is used in an attempt to estimate how many residential, resort, hotel, and office/commercial units will be on Hilton Head Island when all development and redevelopment is completed. The most likely build-out concept assigns land uses to each TAZ based on what the Town believes are the most reasonable and likely developments, not simply the maximum permitted land use as allowed by the current zoning designation. This results in a more realistic build-out scenario.

In 2002 the most recent traffic model for the Island was completed (Long Range Transportation Study, 2002). This effort included a roadway needs analysis based on the "most likely" build-out scenario projected by the Town at that time. The study addressed the current roadway system and identified needs for both roadway and intersection improvements to accommodate the anticipated future traffic conditions.

Concern has been expressed about a few of the potential improvements suggested in that study. In particular, there are sections of William Hilton Parkway that are recommended to be expanded to six lanes and there are three existing intersections recommended to be replaced with grade separated interchanges. The concern is that these improvements will negatively affect existing communities and not fit in with Island character.

In an effort to evaluate the information used for the 2002 model and therefore the need for some of these improvements, revised build-out projections were completed in 2009. A comparison of the 2002 and 2009 land use build-out projections is outlined in Table 9.6, 2009 vs. 2002 Build-out Projections by Land Use.

**Table 9.6: 2009 vs. 2002 Build-out Projections by Land Use**

Use	Change in Build-out 2002 vs. 2009 Projections	Percent Change in Projections 2002 vs. 2009
Government	-19,384 SF	-5.20%
Hotel Motel	170 Units	5.00%
Institutional	-14,921 SF	-0.90%
Light Industrial	-105,663 SF	-6.10%
Mobile Home	-168 Units	-14.50%
Multi-Family	825 Units	4.50%
Single Family	759 Units	4.30%
Office Commercial	249,869 SF	15.70%
Retail Commercial	-266,315 SF	-4.40%

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Development Division

The 2009 data indicates that the total number of residential units on the Island, including mobile home, multi-family and single family, will only increase by 1,416 or 3.8% at build-out. The amount of non-residential development is projected to decrease by 156,414 square feet or 1.4% at build-out.

The land use assumptions that were used in the 2009 projections differed slightly from those used for the 2002 model. These changes helped to provide a more accurate “maximum” build-out scenario. No reductions to the projected number of units or square footage that could potentially be developed on a property were made for property conditions such as wetlands or infrastructure requirements, whereas the 2002 data reduced development potential on all properties by 15% to account for these factors. While these factors do have an impact on the potential utility of properties, they do not discount the by-right use of the property to its full potential. All things considered, the 2009 projections provide for a maximum level of development based on current zoning classifications.

One significant change in land use potential that occurred between 2002 and 2009 is the rezoning of properties on the north end of the Island in the Stoney area to increase the permitted density on some properties. This increase in the permitted density provided an increase in the number of potential build-out units in the 2009 projection. The projected increase in residential units is offset to some degree by the projected reduction of non-residential development. This may be attributed to the Town's Land Acquisition program, which has a goal of reducing the number of trips on the Island's transportation network.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Data on traffic volumes and movements is required to perform accurate traffic modeling. The Town should continue to collect appropriate supporting data to assist in traffic modeling. This will allow for continued monitoring and evaluation of traffic management practices.
- Future development and zoning classifications have an impact on the potential build-out of properties on the Island. Increasing the density of properties in certain areas of the Town may not be appropriate due to the inability of the current transportation network to handle the resulting additional traffic volumes. It may be more appropriate to provide density in areas that have the available roadway capacity and to reduce densities or development potential in areas that do not have the appropriate roadway capacity...
- The analysis of TAZ zones provides a localized view of the travel demand placed on the Island's roadway network from Island residents and visitors; but, it does not provide a macro look at the regional impacts on the transportation system. A regional analysis or travel demand modeling, taking into account potential development in both Beaufort and Jasper Counties, would be an appropriate next step for traffic planning in the region.

## 9.4 Pathway Network

The Town of Hilton Head Island considers people of all ages and demographic groups when planning parks, recreation activities, recreation amenities, and transportation systems such as multi-use pathways. Pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages will be encouraged to use the multi-use pathway system as it evolves into an interconnected system of trails, parks, and other recreational uses. At a walking pace we see, hear, and smell the world around us. By planning portions of the community around the scale and speed of the pedestrian, we can create new opportunities to make walking more enjoyable for Hilton Head Island residents and visitors.

The initiative area plans proposed new multi-use pathways and other design elements that could be constructed to enhance the pedestrian experience and improve area circulation within the study areas. As the redevelopment planning process currently underway moves forward, new public projects that encourage modes of transportation such as walking and bike riding will be identified.

The Town's public pathway network provides residents and visitors with an interconnected, non-motorized vehicular transportation system. Pathways provide access to public and neighborhood beach areas, resort developments, visitor accommodations, shopping, eating establishments, and recreation facilities. They connect to private pathways which are built and maintained by the PUDs. One primary difference in the Town's pathway network and those within PUDs is the ability to drive on the pathways in golf carts.

A survey of area communities provided the following information on golf cart use: The following PUDs allow golf carts on internal roads and paths: Windmill Harbor, Spanish Wells, Leamington, and Indigo Run. In addition, the following PUDs do not allow golf carts but have expressed a desire to consider in the future: Shipyard, Hilton Head Plantation, and Port Royal.

The Town's primary goals for the pathway network are to guide the development and maintenance of a pathway transportation system that provides access and mobility throughout the Town; to educate people about pedestrian and bicyclist transportation; and to reduce traffic volumes by encouraging pathway use.

Planning efforts throughout the Town over the past five years have identified several needs: pedestrian safety, location of pathways and road crossings. The initiative area plans also identified areas where multi-use pathways are needed but do not currently exist. Other needs identified include creating separation between pedestrians and motorists, and roadway or pathway lighting. The Town's first pathway lighting project was completed along the pathway within Compass Rose Park in 2008.

The Land Management Ordinance provides pathway standards that guide the community when maintaining or constructing pathways. These pathways are a major part of the Town's Capital Improvements Program, and high standards are followed during design and construction. The Town attempts to include pathway construction with any road construction or improvement. Recent improvements to the pathway system include signage to alleviate conflicts at strategic locations, sign kiosks, benches, trashcans, and water fountains. Pathways are located in existing rights-of-way, along existing roads and highways, or within other easements such as utility related use where possible.

Island pathways must cross roads at many locations throughout the road network. The typical intersection crossing allows the pathway user to cross the road in front of vehicles that stop at the intersection. This is a typical design used throughout the country and in most cases is the safest alternative.

Conflicts between vehicles, bikes and pedestrians occur when lines of sight for the vehicle driver are not adequate and the driver must pull out over the area where a pathway user crosses. Many of these situations are exacerbated by driver and bicyclist awareness (or lack thereof) and behavior. In order to improve conditions for pathway users, the Town has treated high-demand crossing locations on all major arterials and equipped all of the associated crossings at traffic signals with pedestrian-actuated signal devices. Further, pedestrian refuges have been installed on William Hilton Parkway, on both sides of the Mathews Drive (north) intersection, Old Wild Horse Road, Shelter Cove Lane and Northridge Drive, to name a few.

The Town of Hilton Head Island has implemented a program to inform the public of its pathway system. The Town has constructed new signs and kiosks that are located at key points on the pathways around the Island. These new signs and kiosks will provide more detailed information for pathway users displayed on large easy-to-read maps. The maps provide information to the public regarding points of interest, public pathways (planned and existing), and some area land uses. Moreover, a widely used pathway brochure that describes existing and future pathways is also available to the public.

The pathway system also helps to reduce traffic volumes by encouraging alternative means of transportation to Island destinations. Table 9.7 shows a chronology of Island pathway construction. The public pathway network is illustrated in Figure 9.2.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

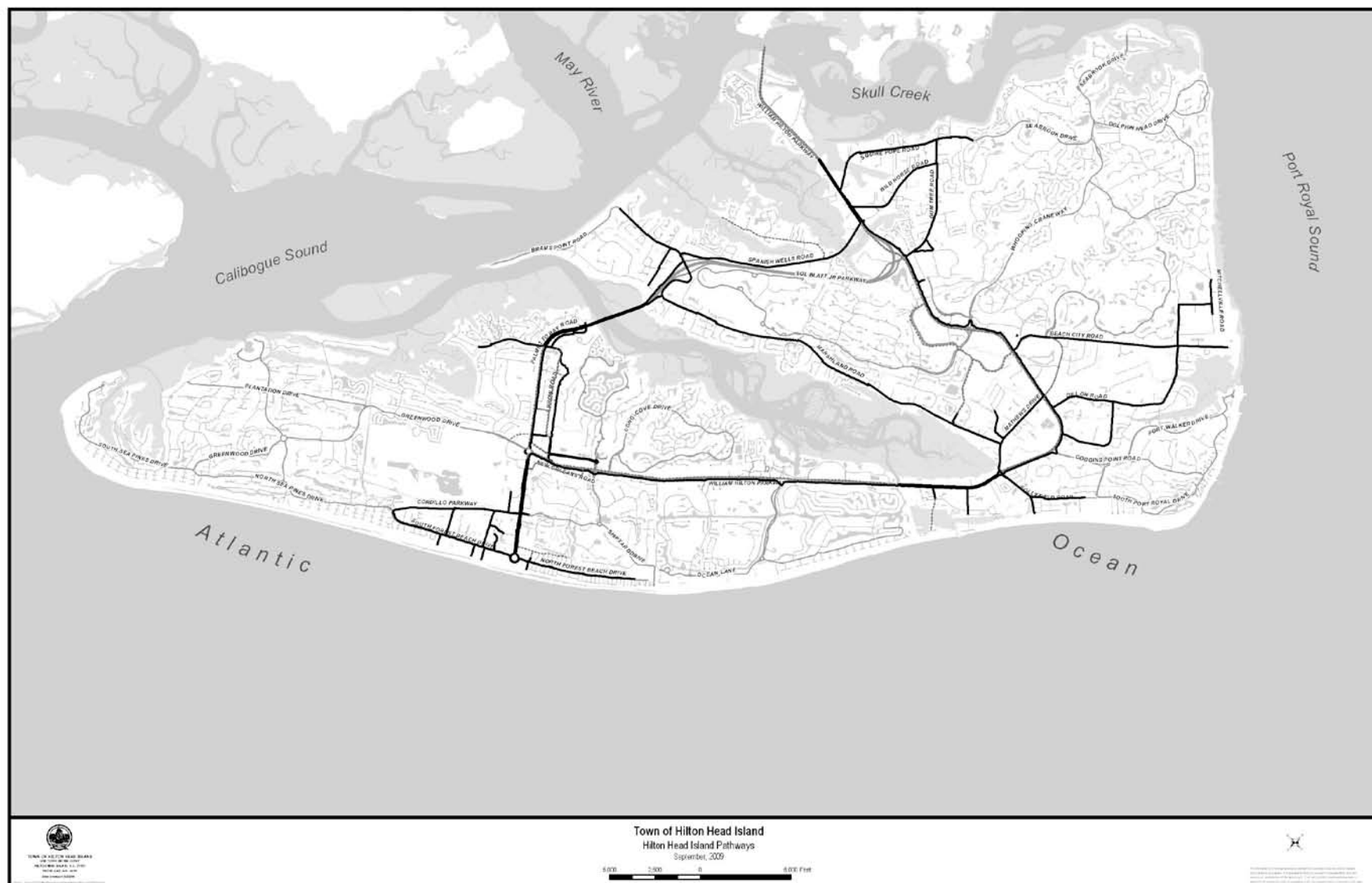
- Pathways do not currently serve all areas of the Island. The Town should continue to move forward with construction of pathways to connect these areas.
- While the Island currently has an extensive pathway network, opportunities to improve pathway connections between destinations that provide additional recreational opportunities and promote alternative means of transportation on the Island should be considered.
- The Island's pathway network could be enhanced by providing a link to the bridge to the mainland in anticipation that other jurisdictions will connect pathway facilities on the mainland
- There may be potential benefits of linking private community pathways to destinations such as shopping and entertainment centers immediately adjacent to the PUDs via pathway connections or secondary access points. This could have the potential to reduce the number of automobile trips on Island roadways, reduce the parking area required to accommodate customers and integrate the PUDs and non PUD areas.

**Table 9.7 Chronology of Town Pathway Projects**

Year	Project
1989	US 278 Business (William Hilton Parkway) – Sea Pines Circle to Palmetto Dunes
1992	US 278 Business (William Hilton Parkway) – Palmetto Dunes to Folly Field Beach Park
1996	US 278 Business (William Hilton Parkway) – Folly Field to Gumtree Road
1992	Cordillo Parkway
1994	South Forest Beach Drive to Cordillo Parkway Connector
1997-1999	Gumtree Road including portions of Wild Horse Road and Squire Pope Road
1999	Beach City Road
1998	Point Comfort Road
1998	Berm Pathway (adjacent to Wexford)
2001	Dillon Road
2001	Fish Haul Road
2001	Folly Field Road
2001	Fraser Bridge
2001	Helmsmans Way
1999	Rehabilitation of North Forest Beach Drive Pathway
1999	Rehabilitation of South Forest Beach Drive Pathway
1999	Rehabilitation of Pope Avenue Bike Lanes
1999	Rehabilitation of Folly Field Pathway
1999	Rehabilitation of US 278 Business (William Hilton Parkway) Pathway
2001	Squire Pope Road
2001	Union Cemetery Road
2002	Nassau Street
2004	Muddy Creek Road
2004	Wild Horse Road
2005	Marshland Road
2005	Mathews Drive (Marshland Road south to Wm. Hilton Parkway)
2006	Spanish Wells Road including boardwalk
2007	Office Park Road
2007	Pope Avenue (Boardwalks)
2007	Pope Avenue Pathway
2008	Mathews Drive Boardwalks
2008	Mathews Drive Pathway
2008	Horseshoe Road
2008	Palmetto Bay Road
2008	Target Road
2010	New Orleans Road

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island

### Figure 9.2: Public Pathway System



## 9.5 Public Transportation

Palmetto Breeze (formerly Lowcountry Regional Transit Authority) is the only public transit provider for the Town, Beaufort County and the surrounding region (Jasper, Allendale, Colleton and Hampton Counties). Palmetto Breeze's main function is to connect the labor force in the surrounding counties of Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, Allendale, and Colleton to employment opportunities on the Island. In order to do this Palmetto Breeze operates fixed route commuter lines, two of which only operate during the summer months. The Town provides five designated shelter stops on the Island, two on the south end of the Island, and three on the north end. In Fiscal Year 2006, Palmetto Breeze had 25 active vehicles providing more than 230,000 passenger trips. Palmetto Breeze receives funding from the five member counties, with the majority of contributions from Beaufort County and the Town. Palmetto Breeze also receives federal rural transit funding under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 funding program. In addition to Palmetto Breeze, internal shuttle systems are currently utilized by private communities to move residents and visitors to select Island locations.

### Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

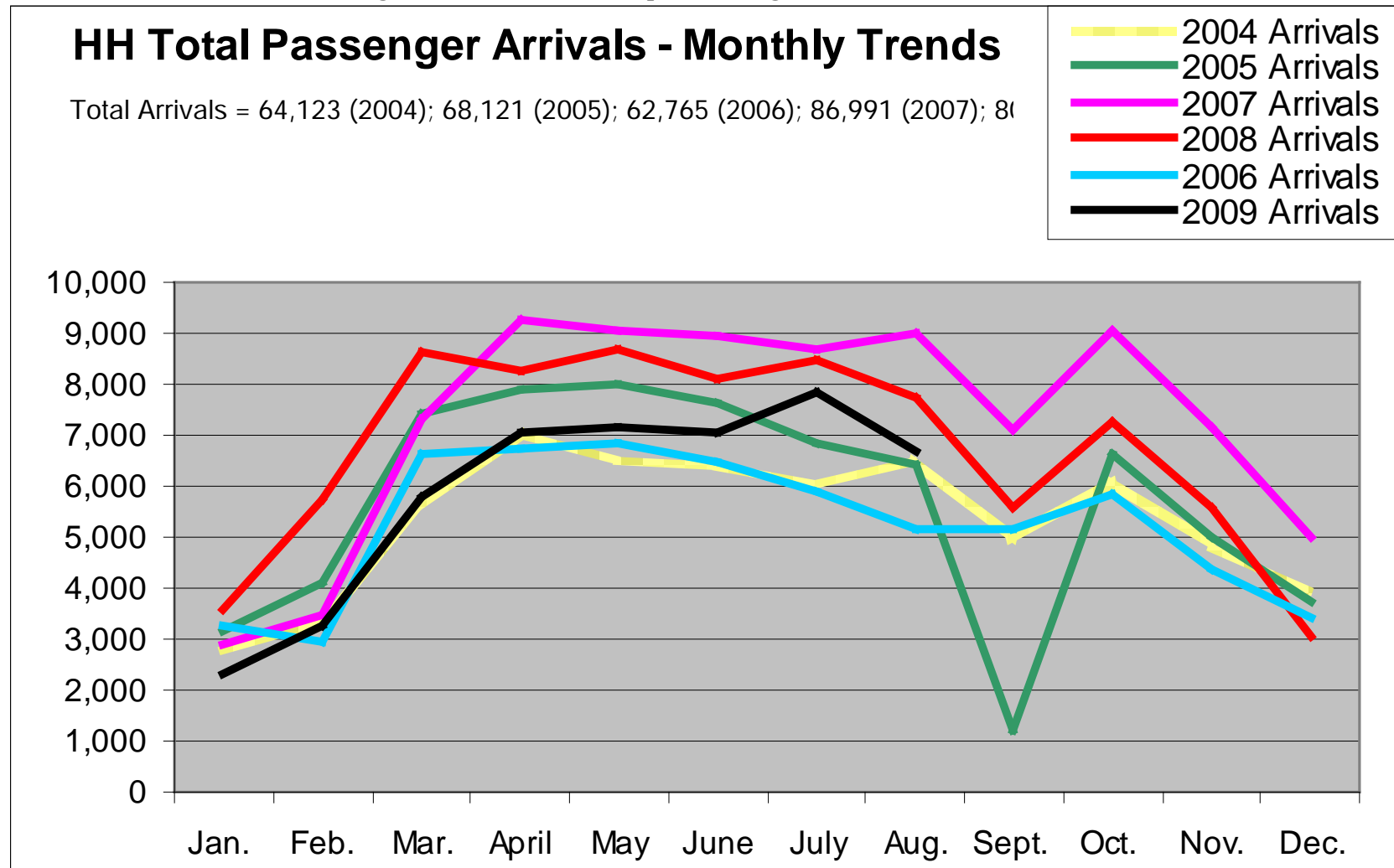
- Current public transportation may not serve the actual needs of the Island community, including certain segments of the population with specific requirements. Better coordination between the Town, public transportation providers, major employers, special needs providers and other agencies could result in an increased utility of public transportation resulting in fewer automobile trips on Island roads.
- Integration of bike racks on buses and linking pathways to bus stops has the potential to enhance the transportation network on the Island and provide a link to off-island users.
- Internal shuttle systems such as the Sea Pines Trolley and Palmetto Dunes Buggy have the potential to reduce trips on Island roads. Expanding this concept to other areas of the Island and coordinating schedules with public transportation routes should be evaluated.

## 9.6 Air Transportation

The Hilton Head Island Airport (HXD) is operated by Beaufort County and the Beaufort County Aviation Board. Facilities include a 4,300 foot runway with two parallel taxiways, one commercial and two general aviation terminals, and professionally trained and equipped fire, crash and rescue teams. The current Hilton Head Island Airport Master Plan called for capital improvements, including; a new control tower, expanded airport facilities for general aviation, a renovation of the commuter air terminal building, and commuter parking improvements which included landscaping, some of which have been implemented. In 2008, the Land Management Ordinance of the Town was amended, limiting the length of an airport runway to 4,300 feet. In addition, a new Airport Master Plan is currently being developed. Recommendations from this effort should be monitored and used to evaluate future airport development and operations. Figure 9.3 shows the number of Hilton Head Airport passenger arrivals from 2004-2009.



**Figure 9.3: Hilton Head Airport Passenger Arrivals 2004-2009**



Source: Hilton Head Island Airport Landing Data

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

The future of Hilton Head Island Airport has become a highly emotional discussion in the community, necessitating an informed “position” be developed from the Town’s perspective (versus the current Airport Master Plan development which views the airport as part of a “regional” issue). Consideration should be given to a Town sponsored Island work group to examine the Airport’s significance to the Island’s future, as part of the overall transportation/communication system of the Island that considers aspects such as, but not limited to:

- A baseline analysis of continued airport operations versus alternate land/asset use.
- Viability for future commercial airline use as part of the overall transportation system serving the Island and leveraging off the value to the community of other Island airport models.
- Use of the airport to serve an underserved market such as the lucrative corporate hospitality and meetings segment.

## 9.7 Marine Transportation

Small ferries exist that connect Hilton Head Island to neighboring Daufuskie Island, which are privately owned and operated. Beaufort County and the School District also contract for ferry service for residents. Finally, other private services exist for moving goods and materials to and from the Island as well as providing recreational trips.

The Island has very few publicly owned docks but has several privately owned and operated boat landings, boat docks and marinas that include some of the following locations:

- Broad Creek Marina - Broad Creek
- Harbour Town Yacht Basin - Calibogue Sound
- Long Cove - Broad Creek
- Palmetto Bay Marina - Broad Creek
- Salty Fare Marina - Skull Creek
- Schilling Boathouse - Skull Creek
- Shelter Cove Marina - Broad Creek
- Skull Creek Marina - Skull Creek
- South Beach Marina - Calibogue Sound
- Windmill Harbour Marina – Jarvis Creek
- Wexford Plantation - Broad Creek

The Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan recommends encouraging waterborne transportation as an alternative mode of future travel. Links between Hilton Head Island and Port Royal, the City of Beaufort, Lady’s Island, Bluffton, Daufuskie, and Savannah are all possibilities.

Boat landings are one way to encourage more waterborne transportation. Two Beaufort County landings are currently open to the public on Hilton Head Island. One is located on the north side of Broad Creek by the Old Oyster Factory. This boat landing is open to the public year-round and is maintained by Beaufort County. The second is located near the Charles E. Fraser Bridge on Broad Creek. This location provides deep-water access for watercraft and has alleviated overcrowding and the lack of adequate water depth during low tide at the Island’s public boat landing off Marshland Road in the headwaters of Broad Creek.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- As an Island, there is potential to expand the transportation network to include marine access to and from the mainland as well as other destinations. Long term integration of a water transportation system, including parking facilities and links to ground transportation, and Palmetto Breeze as a public transportation provider, maybe considered.
- There are opportunities to expand the marine activity and access through installation of publicly owned docks and boat landings as there are very few non-private facilities.

## 9.8 Emergency Evacuation

Hilton Head Island faces several natural threats including flooding, hurricanes, fire or other natural disasters that could require an evacuation of all or parts of the Town. In 1999 Hilton Head Island created an Emergency Operations Plan. This plan describes the policies and procedures that the Town will utilize to coordinate with local, county, state, and federal agencies in the event of a disaster or threat from disaster. The plan also describes how the community will mobilize when a hurricane or other evacuation is imminent. Transportation routes on both the Island and mainland become critical for successful evacuations. An updated plan is currently under development.

The opening of the Cross Island Parkway has changed the Island's evacuation procedures and allows for an alternate transportation route between the north and south ends of the Island.

Hilton Head Island has been evacuated several times in the past because of threatening hurricanes: Hurricane David in 1979, Hurricane Hugo in 1989, Hurricane Bertha and Hurricane Fran in 1996, and Hurricane Floyd in 1999. The evacuation for Floyd was accomplished with the additional capacity of the Cross Island Parkway, which was heavily utilized at that time.

Certain types of development in the Town are required by the LMO to submit an Evacuation Plan prior to approval of development applications. These plans require the organizations to have evacuation transportation methods in place. The plans are reviewed and approved by the Beaufort County Emergency Management Department. Unfortunately, experience has shown that many of the facilities contract with the same provider for evacuation transportation, resulting in delays and the need for public resources to be used to evacuate people from those facilities when the contracted provider cannot meet their commitments. The types of development required to have such a plan are:

- Development employing 25 or more persons relying on mass transit.
- Hotels, motels or similar facilities.
- Hospitals, nursing homes and similar facilities.
- Schools, camps, residential clubs, daycare centers and similar facilities.

Efficient mainland transportation is extremely critical to the success of evacuating Hilton Head Island during a natural disaster. During Hurricane Floyd in 1999 evacuees faced major traffic jams once they reached the interior of the State and region. In Beaufort County the evacuation was successful, but future evacuations will become predictably more congested and longer waits for evacuees are inevitable at many locations. It should be remembered that Beaufort County's population is expected to double by 2020.

It is the policy of Beaufort County Emergency Management Department to evacuate the Town of Hilton Head Island in 12 hours or less (18 hours if the Island is heavily populated during a holiday). During the last four evacuations, the Island was successfully evacuated in less than 12 hours. Hurricane Hugo's evacuation was accomplished in just under 10 hours.

Fast moving Hurricane Bertha threatened the Island during the heavy tourist season in July of 1996. The hurricane turned farther north, resulting in many residents deciding not to leave the Island at the last minute. Two months later during Hurricane Fran, the Island was evacuated in phases—tourists and visitors during the first four hours, residents living on the southern part of the Island during the next four hours, and residents on the north end leaving during the latter four hours. In 1999, a similar phased evacuation during Hurricane Floyd was successful.

In preparation for the 2003 hurricane season, plans were finalized for a third lane to take traffic off Hilton Head Island, and a fourth lane if it became necessary due to conditions. This will entail conversion of one or both inbound lanes of US 278 into outbound lanes. The Town and County plan to use this method of evacuation during the peak tourism season if evacuation is necessary. The third lane would start at the intersection of Spanish Wells Road on William Hilton Parkway, and would continue west to Interstate 95 in Hardeeville.

While improvements have been made to some highways inland from the coast in response to the Hurricane Floyd evacuation, concerns still remain regarding the lack of a good road system in the interior portion of South Carolina. The Town and County should coordinate with South Carolina Department of Transportation to improve interior roads in anticipation of major coastal evacuations that will be more congested with increasing coastal population.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The population of the Island and region has reached the level where emergency evacuations pose significant challenges. These include safely evacuating Island residents and visitors by providing advanced warnings of a potential risk, ensuring that the Island's roads are adequately maintained and working with State, County and regional entities to provide safe and efficient evacuation routes.

## 9.9 Regional Transportation Issues

Southern Beaufort County and Hilton Head Island are growing at a rapid rate and Hilton Head Island is approaching “build out” status. Hilton Head Island had a population of 33,862 people in the 2000 Census. The Island is expected to have a build out population of approximately 53,300.

Beaufort County is expected to grow from a population of 158,314 in 2006 to a population of 227,898 persons by 2020. (Beaufort County Impact Fee Study, 2006) This phenomenal growth will place increasingly greater strains on an already busy and congested transportation system in southern Beaufort County where much of the growth will occur. New businesses and institutions, recreational opportunities, and new housing starts, will compound transportation problems, yet there are no current plans to widen the two major Interstates leading to the Lowcountry, Interstate 95 and Interstate 26.

William Hilton Parkway is the only way on and off the Island for motorists. Widening of US 278 on the mainland and the William Hilton Parkway/Squire Pope intersection improvement project have for the most part mitigated most traffic issues of getting on and off the Island. Minor delays and congestion are occasionally experienced during the morning and afternoon rush hour periods during peak volume times of the year or when incidents requiring emergency vehicle response occur.

Growth in southern Beaufort County precipitated transportation improvements, such as the construction of the Bluffton Parkway, and widening of US 278 to six lanes from the Bridge to Simmonsville Road, meant to accommodate increased traffic volumes and to assist in emergency evacuations.

Beaufort County has studied the US 278 Corridor in the southern part of the county and has adopted an Intermediate Needs, a Short-Term Needs and a Long Term Needs Study. This study includes access management recommendations along US 278 in southern Beaufort County. The study provides recommendations for new roads; intersection improvements; roadway improvements and new design/safety standards; interconnections between developments; and funding sources for projects.

In addition, the Town has assisted the County and the Town of Bluffton in drafting an ordinance to require traffic studies with mitigating solutions be conducted by developers in order to obtain permits. These ordinances would be similar to one already adopted by the Town of Hilton Head Island. However, they have currently not been adopted.

The County has taken steps to resolve countywide traffic problems including:

- Adoption of a County Comprehensive Plan that includes a section on Transportation Planning.
- Creation of a multi-governmental County Transportation Advisory Group (BCTAG) whose mission is to serve as the principal entity responsible for planning and oversight of the County's road transportation system.
- Retention of a transportation consulting firm to undertake traffic modeling; update a functional classification map; review a traffic impact fee ordinance; study new and alternate road systems in certain parts of the County; draft a US 278 Corridor Access Road and Management Plan; draft Bluffton and Beaufort Bypass Alignment and Access Management Plans; investigate funding alternatives; and determine locations for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Creation of a US 278 Corridor Study Committee (sub-committee to BCTAG) which includes staff members of Bluffton, Hilton Head Island, Beaufort, Port Royal, Yemassee, Beaufort County, Jasper County, and LCOG, LRTA, BCSO, and SCDOT.
- Improvements to intersections on side streets and US 278.
- Administration of a grant for median landscaping along certain parts of US 278.
- Working with SCDOT to implement more efficient traffic signal timings.
- Installed several roadway improvements including traffic signals and median closures as part of implementing the Immediate Needs Study.
- Development and installation of Intelligent Transportation System, which includes video surveillance, motorist assistance patrols, and highway advisory radio messages.
- Completed the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan from which the county updated impact fees and adopted a one-cent capital project sales tax referendum for \$150 million to assist in funding specified road improvements.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Development on the mainland continues to impact the Island, creating issues related to increased volume and travel times on US 278. The town should make every attempt to ensure that traffic conditions on the mainland provide the minimum amount of adverse impacts to the development and enjoyment of the Island. This should include coordination with all appropriate entities that make decisions that impact the US 278 corridor, including South Carolina Department of Transportation, Beaufort and Jasper Counties, the Town of Bluffton, the City of Hardeeville and the Lowcountry Council of Governments.

## 9.10 Goals and Implementation Strategies

Key issues of transportation were identified based on public input that was received throughout this process and data that was collected by Town staff. Transportation needs are not isolated; therefore, the implementation strategies should be approached regionally and collectively, integrating a palette of solutions.

### Goals

#### **Goal 9.1 Road Network**

- A. The goal is to improve the road network by creating safe and convenient access and interconnections to all areas of the Island while protecting community investments, neighborhoods, and the natural environment.
- B. The goal is to maintain specific traffic analysis standards in the Land Management Ordinance to guide development in accordance with existing and future needs of the Town.
- C. The goal is to provide intersection design standards and maintenance for public safety while considering the unique Island character, aesthetics, topography, vegetation, environmentally sensitive areas, and neighborhood cohesiveness.
- D. The goal is to maintain all roads on Hilton Head Island to ensure safety and adequate access.
- E. The goal is to ensure that aesthetic and vegetative character are maintained and improved along main arterials without sacrificing safety.
- F. The goal is to maintain Town landmarks through Transportation planning efforts.
- G. The goal is to minimize the negative impact of construction projects on adjacent neighborhoods.

#### **Goal 9.2 Traffic Volumes and Trends**

- A. The goal is to acquire and maintain data on traffic volume for the road network throughout the year to access existing and potential deficiencies in the transportation network.
- B. The goal is to have multiple of transportation options available to residents, visitors and employees.

#### **Goal 9.3 Traffic Modeling**

- A. The goal is to collect data on traffic volume for the road network throughout the year and provide a basis for making future transportation and land use decisions.

#### **Goal 9.4 Multi-Use Pathways**

- A. The goal is to expand the pathway network to provide pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users of non-motorized transit with a safe and efficient infrastructure to connect residential and tourist areas to schools, parks, commercial areas, and potential off-Island connections.
- B. The goal is to complement public transit operations such as those of the Palmetto Breeze (LRTA), by connecting transit stops with employment destinations and tourist destinations.

#### **Goal 9.5 Public Transportation**

- A. The goal is to identify the Island-wide needs for public transportation and research alternative ways to provide the needed services.

#### **Goal 9.6 Air Transportation**

- A. The goal is to ensure that airport operations remain safe while providing air travel to Island.
- B. The goal is to ensure that development surrounding the airport is designed and constructed to minimize the negative impacts of being located near the airport.

#### **Goal 9.7 Marine Transportation**

- A. The goal is to integrate a marine-based transportation option into the transportation network that has the potential to serve Town residents, visitors and employees.



### **Goal 9.8 Emergency Evacuation**

- A. The goal is to work with appropriate agencies to plan for and implement safe and efficient evacuation routes away from the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

### **Goal 9.9 Regional Transportation Issues**

- A. The goal is to promote regional transportation and land use planning for all of southern Beaufort County.
- B. The goal is to work with appropriate agencies to provide input on roadway improvements along the US 278 corridor and projects such as the widening of I-95 and I-26.

## **Implementation Strategies**

### **9.1 Road Network**

- A. Continue to coordinate with SCDOT and Beaufort County to maintain the current capacity of William Hilton Parkway and other arterials by controlling access points and median crossing locations, improving intersections, adding deceleration lanes or extending existing deceleration lanes, optimizing the synchronized traffic lights and investigating other methods of traffic management and development control.
- B. Develop plans for alternate road systems to remove some of the traffic burden from William Hilton Parkway.
- C. Support installation of infrastructure that promote efficiency, improves environmental quality and promotes alternatives to traditional automobile travel such as recharge station for electric cars and leading edge technologies such as hydrogen fuel cells.
- D. Secure adequate land for needed transportation improvements.
- E. Implement intersection signal improvement proposals (left turn signals, right turn signals, pedestrian signals and crosswalks, etc.) that have been endorsed by the South Carolina Department of Transportation.
- F. Continue to consider the use of standard intersection design, traffic circles or roundabouts, when developing road improvement projects.
- G. Consider implementation of concepts such as “Complete Streets” that integrates multiple forms of transportation modes and promotes connectivity.
- H. Continue to implement the use of mast arms at traffic signals and install light emitting diode (LED) traffic lights exclusively at all signalized intersections.
- I. Coordinate with gated communities to identify and provide alternative ingress/egress points for emergency vehicles.
- J. Continue to purchase parcels that have high traffic generating development potential.
- K. Continue to maintain traffic analysis standards in the Land Management Ordinance.
- L. Discourage the installation of traffic signals permitted at a spacing of less than 1,500 feet from established signalized intersections.
- M. Continue to seek funding for safety improvements to Island roads by coordinating with SCDOT, County Transportation Committee (CTC), and other entities to secure funds.
- N. Maintain and update the transportation impact fees program for both the Town and County with new developments paying for new road modifications based on their impact to the transportation system.
- O. Coordinate with State and local law enforcement officials to enforce laws regarding all vehicle standards, towing regulations and other regulations that improve safety.
- P. Continue to educate and involve the public regarding transportation safety issues via television, radio, direct mail, internet and all other appropriate media and alternative education forums.
- Q. Continue to improve and streamline signage for better direction.
- R. Using local traffic accident data to design and evaluate projects to minimize injuries.
- S. Work with and encourage Beaufort County, the South Carolina DOT, and private road owners to maintain their roadways and associated drainage facilities.
- T. Develop and maintain a priority list for dirt road paving.

- U. Coordinate with SC DOT and Beaufort County to protect the capital investment in the transportation system through adequate maintenance of facilities and roadways.
- V. Continue to transfer all Town-owned roads to the County for ownership and maintenance and support litter-control efforts on and off-Island.
- W. Periodically review and update the design and performance standards relating to road building, landscaping, and buffering to ensure that aesthetic and vegetative character are maintained and improved along the Island's roads.
- X. Examine and install streetscaping methods that do not hinder a driver's vision for use along business sections of William Hilton Parkway and other major and minor arterial roads.
- Y. Utilize the streetscape to establish a character or theme for redevelopment areas, recreation or activity centers, pedestrian oriented areas, and gateways.
- Z. Retain Sea Pines Circle as a Circle.
- AA. Preserve and protect the public investment in the landscaped medians along William Hilton Parkway to the greatest extent practicable.
- BB. Utilize streetscaping techniques such as coordinated landscaping, lighting, street furniture, and other public amenities on all appropriate new or reconstructed roads.
- CC. Investigate all possible alternatives to widening William Hilton Parkway before committing to such a project.
- DD. Future roadway widening projects within the Town should be carefully planned to protect vegetative cover along roads, and to assure neighborhoods are not excessively adversely impacted.
- EE. Consider improvements to the Town's Drainage Plan and other Capital Improvement Projects in conjunction with transportation improvements.
- FF. Coordinate road improvements with the Island's Drainage Study and any other drainage, water or sewer improvement project.
- GG. Continue to update and maintain a ten-year Capital Improvement Program in accordance with all state laws. This program should consider road and multi-use pathway improvements, park and town facilities, and drainage projects, at a minimum.

## 9.2 Traffic Volumes and Trends

- A. Acquire traffic data for the Town on at a regular interval and provide a trend analysis at least once per year.
- B. Coordinate a periodic review of regional traffic volumes and trends with appropriate organizations in the region.

## 9.3 Traffic Modeling

- A. Coordinate traffic modeling with regional partners to develop a regional transportation vision that identifies critical transportation deficiencies that should be addressed.
- B. Conduct consistent traffic counting each year at strategic points on the Island.
- C. To obtain necessary data for traffic modeling and management, ensure the four existing permanent traffic counters continue to function properly, and obtain updates to the software necessary to run the system when appropriate.
- D. Continue to prepare Traffic Monitoring and Evaluation Reports on an annual basis.
- E. Perform traffic modeling at least once every 10 years, or more often as needs and concerns dictate, to identify roadway improvements and capital improvement projects.
- F. Continuously monitor and improve traffic management practices.
- G. Monitor the function of traffic circles and roundabouts, especially Sea Pines Circle.

## 9.4 Multi-Use Pathways

- A. Expand the Island's Multi-Use Pathway System to connect all appropriate land uses such as parks, schools, open spaces, and beach access facilities on the Island along with residential and commercial destinations:
  - i. Continue to assess the viability of constructing pathways along with each Town road improvement project or drainage project.
  - ii. Identify areas for sidewalk or multi-use pathway locations which have significant commercial, recreational, resort, entertainment or other intense public use but do not have a adequate pedestrian or bicycle access.
  - iii. Establish multi-use pathways on both sides of William Hilton Parkway.
  - iv. Investigate the use of power line easements for potential multi-use pathway locations.
  - v. Install bicycle loop detectors to count bicycle trips at selected locations on the Island's multi-use pathways to determine needs.
  - vi. Encourage bicycle parking facilities, especially on Town-owned properties.
- B. Encourage new public and private development and redevelopment to create connections to the Island Multi-Use Pathway System:
  - i. Educate developers during pre-application conferences of future multi-use pathway locations in relation to their development and encourage developers to include pathways or sidewalks along all roads within their development and connections to the existing public system.
  - ii. Coordinate with Beaufort County, Bluffton, and the Lowcountry Council of Governments to connect Island multi-use pathways to pathway systems on the mainland.
  - iii. Continue to seek funding for safety improvements to Island multi-use pathways by coordinating with SC DOT, CTC (County Transportation Committee), and other entities to secure funds.
- C. Continue to improve safety of the Island's Multi-use Pathway System by identifying conflicts and improvement opportunities:
  - i. Inventory areas for safety on an annual basis for problems such as low-hanging vegetation, inadequate signage, lines of sight, and irregular asphalt.
  - ii. Schedule safety maintenance of pathways at least annually.
  - iii. Coordinate with SC DOT and other agencies as well as private road owners to mark major intersection crossings with colored and textured pavement or painted crosswalks, and install pedestrian activated crosswalks where needed.
  - iv. Utilize accident data to determine pedestrian and bicyclist needs at intersections.
  - v. Identify pedestrian crossing signal locations on all roads and plans for their installation should be included in the Capital Improvement Program.
  - vi. Ensure warning signs that alert motorists of pedestrian/cyclist crossings on all roadways are installed and maintained for visibility.
- D. Continue to promote the Island Multi-Use Pathway System as a viable alternative to auto-oriented transportation:
  - i. Produce brochures showing relationship of multi-use pathways to shopping areas and other areas of interest, and distribute to the general public through bicycle rental shops, hotels, and other appropriate places.
  - ii. Educate the public about multi-use pathways via the world-wide web, newspaper and other media.
  - iii. Maintain and update the Town's multi-use pathway kiosk signs along the pathways.

## 9.5 Public Transportation

- A. Prepare a Public Transportation Plan to address public transportation issues on the Island. This plan should include a needs assessment and recommendations for actions to meet identified deficiencies. All modes of public transit should be considered, and attention should be given to special populations such as the disabled and elderly.
- B. Support the coordination of regional public transit to serve the mainland and the Island for workers and visitors, including the potential for public transit to the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport. Work with the County and other government entities such as LCOG, SC DOT, GDOT the Town of Bluffton, and Jasper and Chatham Counties to investigate and implement new options for public transportation such as marine transit, small-gauge rail service, trolley service, and ride-share programs.
- C. Continue to promote public transportation by providing infrastructure, transit shelters, pull-off lanes, and multi-use pathway links to existing viable transportation services that move people to and from mainland locations and within the Island, and promote shuttle service as a transportation mode for hotels and resort areas.
- D. Consider public transportation options when planning and designing new public improvement projects such as parks, marinas, and other public land-uses.
- E. Support coordination between public transportation providers, major employers and special needs providers to increase utility of public transportation resulting in fewer automobile trips on Island roads.
- F. Support enhancements to the public transportation network, including integration of bike racks on buses and linking pathways to bus stops providing a link to off-island users.
- G. Explore potential for internal shuttle systems such as the Sea Pines Trolley and Palmetto Dunes Buggy to reduce trips on Island roads. Expanding this concept to other areas of the Island and coordinating schedules with public transportation routes should be evaluated.

## 9.6 Air Transportation

- A. Coordinate with Beaufort County during their update of the Airport Master Plan.
- B. Assist Beaufort County with pre-planning for airport modifications.
- C. Continue to review development proposals within the Airport Hazard Overlay District to ensure the site is designed with the maximum safety possible for the occupants of the site.
- D. Coordinate and plan with Beaufort County to utilize the airport as a staging ground during a disaster recovery.

## 9.7 Marine Transportation

- A. Support efforts to expand marine transportation that reduces vehicular trips on Island road or increases revenue through expanded tourism.
- B. Support coordination of regional partners to assess potential water-borne transportation to serve areas from Beaufort to Savannah.

## 9.8 Emergency Evacuation

- A. Coordinate with appropriate agencies to plan for and evaluate the capacity of emergency evacuation routes through Beaufort and Jasper Counties and the State of South Carolina, including the widening of I-95 and I-26.
- B. Coordinate with SCDOT and Jasper County to connect Route 321 to I-95 (Exit 8) for a direct interior route from the interstate to one of Beaufort County's evacuation routes.
- C. Coordinate with SCDOT to widen I-95 from Exit 8 south to the Georgia border where it connects with an existing 6 lane section going south to I-16.
- D. Coordinate with regional planning agencies including Savannah-Chatham County, GA to examine evacuations on a regional basis.
- E. Coordinate with SCDOT and GDOT to ensure that roads in the interior portions of South Carolina and Georgia are designed to handle coastal evacuations.

## 9.9 Regional Transportation Issues

- A. Engage in cooperative planning efforts with officials from Jasper County, LCOG, and Chatham County (GA) to provide input on their land use decisions that will affect shared use of major transportation modes and infrastructure.
- B. Sponsor a series of workshops with regional transportation partners to develop a regional transportation vision that identifies needs and provides a unified voice for the region when requesting funding for transportation improvements.
- C. Establish a close working relationship with SCDOT by continuing to meet at a minimum on a quarterly basis to review Town, County and regional transportation issues.
- D. Coordinate with SC DOT, Bluffton, and Beaufort County for the creation of a secondary road system in southern Beaufort County.
- E. Coordinate with SC DOT, Beaufort and Jasper Counties, and Bluffton to maintain the current capacity of US 278 in southern Beaufort County by controlling access points, improving intersections, adding deceleration lanes, computer-controlling traffic signals, maintaining the Intelligent Transportation System, and investigating other methods of traffic management.
- F. Coordinate with the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County to assist their staffs with growth management strategies such as public land acquisition, purchase or transfer of development rights, and other planning tools.
- G. Assist Bluffton and Beaufort County with mapping processes.
- H. Assist Beaufort County with development of an updated regional traffic model.

# 10 Recreation

*To enrich the quality of life for residents and visitors by providing diverse recreational facilities and programs which respond to changing needs of the population.*

## Introduction

Hilton Head Island has become well-known throughout the country as a world class resort destination recognized for its high quality recreational amenities and natural resources. Private resort and residential communities located on the Island provide an exceptional number of leisure facilities highlighting tennis, golf, swimming, bicycling, and boating. The Town government excels in providing specialized recreational facilities such as beach parks, leisure pathways, and ball fields where both residents and visitors may participate in recreation activities. The Town strives to work with public and private recreation organizations to promote leisure time programs and activities that will accommodate all ages, skill levels and interests of residents and visitors.

As discussed in the Cultural and Natural Resources Elements, the Island has a rich cultural history and an abundance of natural resources, including numerous archaeological sites that range from prehistoric shell rings to Civil War sites. The natural resources of the Island provide a highly scenic and diverse landscape that offers outstanding views to water, marshes, maritime forests, and wetlands.

Over the past 15 years the Town of Hilton Head Island has taken steps to assess the future park and recreation needs of Island residents. The Parks and Recreation Commission was created in 1992 to establish long and short term goals for development and management of parks and recreational facilities. In October 1995 the first Recreation and Open Space Plan was written outlining recreation needs for the next twenty years. The plan was adopted by Town Council on January 3, 1996 as an appendix to the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The plan was then amended in 1998 and 2000 to address additional future park locations. In 2005, the Recreation Element replaced the Recreation and Open Space Plan and was adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The Recreation Element now includes revised park definitions; an existing facilities inventory; and new park guidelines which are currently in use. Listed below are park definitions which pertain to existing and future parks.

These definitions should be used as guidelines. Due to the unique characteristics of Hilton Head Island these definitions must be flexible. Existing and future parks may not fall neatly into one specific park category. For example, the Town beach parks which are listed as special use parks may also be considered regional parks.

Park service areas are referred to in the park definitions below. A park service area defines the geographic location of expected users. Accessory uses, although not stated in every definition, may be implied at both parks and facilities. For example, accessory uses at a gymnasium, may include fitness or aerobics classes, karate classes, basketball courts, and volleyball courts.

## 10.1 Park Definitions

### Activity Categories

*Passive Park:* A park and/or recreation area that is used for passive activities which may include walking, cultural and educational activities, contemplative activity, picnicking, non-organized sports activities, playground areas and beach access to name a few examples. Some small scale active activities may be included in a passive park.

*Active Park:* A park and/or recreation area that is used for active activities which may include organized sporting events and may be comprised of multi-purpose fields, multi-purpose sports courts, playground areas, multi-purpose trails, and boat landings. Passive activities may also be included in an active park.



## Park Categories

*Mini-Park:* The mini-park is the smallest park classification which is used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs. Mini-parks, also known as pocket parks, address unique recreational needs such as landscaped public use areas in a commercial or residential area, or scenic overlook areas. The mini-park may include such passive uses such as picnic areas, arbors, sitting areas and public art. Accessibility to mini-parks may be via interconnecting trails, sidewalks, or low-volume streets. Portions of the park site should be readily visible from adjoining streets to provide a secure environment. A mini-park may be between 2,500 square feet and 1 acre in size. However, park areas less than 5 acres may also be considered a mini-park. Ease of access from the surrounding area and linkage to the community pathway system are key concerns when selecting a mini-park site.

*Neighborhood Park:* The neighborhood park should serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. It may be developed for both active and passive recreational activities, and accommodate a wide variety of age and user groups. Creating a sense of place by bringing together the unique character of the site with that of the neighborhood is important to successful design. A neighborhood park should be centrally located within its service area, which may be ¼ mile to ½ mile radius. Ease of access and walking distance are critical factors in locating a neighborhood park. Generally 1 acre is the accepted minimum size necessary to provide space for a variety of recreation activities, while 1 to 5 acres may be considered optimal. Active recreational facilities should be used in an informal and unstructured manner. Neighborhood parks are not intended for programmed activities that result in overuse, noise, parking problems or congestion. Examples of active facilities are playgrounds or structures, court games, informal play fields, and tennis courts. Examples of passive uses are internal trails connecting to a pathway system, picnic/sitting areas, and contemplative or "people watching" areas. Generally active recreational facilities should consume approximately 50 percent of the park's acreage and the remaining 50 percent should be used for passive activities.

*Community Park:* The community park is larger in size and serves a broader purpose than neighborhood parks. Their focus should be on meeting the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community. They allow for group activities and may offer other recreational opportunities not available at neighborhood parks. Community parks should be developed for both passive and active recreational activities. The optimal size for a community park is between 20 and 50 acres, but its actual size should be based on the land area needed to accommodate desired uses. Reserved and programmed uses are compatible and acceptable for a community park. Examples of active facilities at a community park may include large playgrounds or structures, game courts, ball fields, and swimming pools. Examples of passive facilities may include extensive internal trails, individual and group picnic areas, nature study areas, contemplative and sitting areas. Parking lots should be provided to accommodate user access.

*Special Use Park:* The special use park should offer the opportunity to highlight unique local historical, educational, cultural, and natural resources. Examples may include performing arts parks, special events parks, arboretums, ornamental gardens, amphitheaters, boat landing or other water-oriented facilities and beach parks. Features within a special use park may include both hardscape and softscape development for commemorative purposes. Park use may be passive with some sites functioning as venues for festivals, concerts and other special events. Special use facilities should be viewed as strategically-located community-wide facilities rather than as serving a specific neighborhood or area. The special use park is generally accessed by pedestrians via walkways, sidewalks, or trails around and throughout the site as well as by automobiles. Parking should be provided as appropriate for the specific park - some parks require a significant amount of parking (e.g., beach park) while others do not. Opportunities for sharing parking with nearby facilities should be explored for parks with occasional heavy use (e.g., performing arts park). Park use and space requirements are the primary factors in determining the size of the park site.

*Regional Park:* Regional parks supplement neighborhood and community parks and may serve broader-based recreational needs. The greater size permits large-scale development of both passive and active facilities providing a wide range of recreational activities. Regional parks may include sizeable areas of undeveloped land with natural vegetation and/or water features. The optimal size for a regional park may be between 50 and 85 acres. Regional parks may have a service area within reasonable and equal driving distance from the populations served. Some residential development should be within walking distance of the park, but any high use activity areas within the park should not be situated adjacent to residential areas. Regional parks may have frontage on major and minor arterial streets and may have designated bicycle and pedestrian pathway access. Major streets should be routed around, rather than through regional parks. One or more parking lots should be provided to accommodate user access. Examples of active facilities at a regional park include a large playground, sports complexes (possibly lighted) with single or multi-purpose fields and concession buildings, basketball courts, multi-use courts, tennis courts, and swimming pools. Examples of passive facilities include open spaces and nature reserves, extensive internal trails, one or more picnic areas, one or more picnic pavilions of varying sizes, fishing access sites, and landscaped contemplative areas.

*Private Park/Recreational Facility:* This classification recognizes contributions of private providers to the community park and recreation system. Private parks such as swimming pools, tennis courts, and party houses or meeting rooms are generally within residential areas developed solely for the use of residents and are maintained by a neighborhood association. These facilities should not be considered as a complete substitute for public recreation space. Other private recreational facilities are for-profit businesses such as health and fitness clubs, golf courses, and water parks. The location of private parks/recreational facilities is typically determined by a developer. Service areas for these parks will depend on the type of use. The size of the park is also dependent on the intended use of the park.

*Linear Park:* Linear parks are greenways of open space that may offer scenic beauty and may allow safe, uninterrupted pedestrian or bicycle movement along natural or man-made corridors. Generally they are located along waterways. Linear parks combined with the planned pathway system may link various other parks, residential neighborhoods, schools, libraries and businesses. Pedestrian and bicycle trails can accommodate both recreational and purposeful trips. Linear parks should conserve ecologically unique areas along marshes and creeks and provide long stretches of open space well suited for pathways. Existing tree cover within natural corridors should be protected. The maximum length of a linear park may be variable. The minimum width should be 50 feet. Support facilities throughout the linear park should include benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, signage, and connectors to adjacent parks and pathways.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The detailed definitions for the different park categories provide the Town with more information to plan for future parks and provide a tool to plan for specific types of parks to serve the community.

## 10.2 Major Facility Categories

These are the major facility categories along with a description. Other facility categories are self-explanatory.

*Multi-Use Pathway or Trail:* Multi-use pathways or trails may be designed to provide walking, skating, bicycling, and other non-motorized recreational opportunities. These pathways should provide linkages to other areas and facilities and offer non-vehicular options for travel through the community. Paved pathways should generally be developed to a high level to accommodate greater numbers of users of all abilities. Non-paved pathways should generally be developed to match the intent of the park or recreational area in which it is located.

*Swimming Pool:* Swimming pools for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive, and recreational purposes with enough space to accommodate diving boards. For teaching purposes the size of the swimming pool should be 75 feet by 45 feet and have an even depth of 3 to 4 feet in non-diving areas. For competitive purposes the size of the swimming pool should be 75 feet by 70 feet. This will accommodate approximately ten swimming lanes with a minimum of 25 square feet of water surface per swimmer. Generally swimming pools should be located in community or regional parks, within a 15 to 30 minute travel time for facility users.

*Basketball Courts:* Outdoor basketball courts for general community use should have unobstructed space on all sides. Generally outdoor basketball courts should be located in neighborhood or community parks and regional parks. The service radius for an outdoor basketball court is between ¼ mile and ½ mile and should have safe walking or biking access for facility users.

*Tennis Courts:* Outdoor tennis courts for general community use should be 36 feet by 78 feet and have a minimum of 12 feet clearance on both ends of the court and should be planned in groups of 2 to 4 courts in one location. Generally outdoor tennis courts should be located in neighborhood or community parks and regional parks. An outdoor tennis court should have safe walking and biking access for facility users.

*Baseball/Softball Field:* Baseball/Softball fields for general community use should be located in community or regional parks. Baseball/softball fields should be within a 15 to 30 minute travel time for facility users.

*Multi-Purpose Rectangular Field:* Multi-purpose rectangular sports fields for general community use should be located in community or regional parks. Examples of activities played on multi-purpose rectangular fields include football, soccer, lacrosse, and rugby. Multi-purpose rectangular fields will vary in size based on the intended use of the field - youth activities, adult activities, practice activities, programmed activities and tournament activities.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The detailed definitions for the different recreational facilities provide the Town with the background needed to plan for future facilities and provide the basis to determine future needs.

### 10.3 Park Sites

Table 10.1, Existing Island Parks, shows the existing parks listed by park category based on the general park definitions in Section 10.2. Some of these parks contain characteristics of multiple categories and were placed in the category that most describes their characteristics.

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- An inventory of each facility, the type and the location should be used as a tool in determining whether or not the recreational facilities adequately serve the visitors and population of the community.

**Table 10.1: Existing Island Parks**

<b>Park Category</b>	<b>Existing Parks</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Mini Park	Compass Rose Park	2
Neighborhood Park	Old Schoolhouse Greens Shell	3 3
Community Park	Barker Field* Island Recreation Center* Jarvis Creek * Crossings Park* Chaplin Community Park* Barker Field Expansion/Mitchelville Beach Park	20 6 56 74 67 27
Special Use Park	Shelter Cove Park Shelter Cove Memorial Park Fish Haul Park Folly Field Beach Park Islanders Beach Park* Alder Lane Beach Park Malphrus Beach Park Coligny Beach Park Cordillo Courts* Driessen Beach Park* Xeriscape Interpretive Garden Marshland Road Boat Landing Old House Fishing Pier Cross Island Boat Landing Honey Horn Northridge (limited use due to conservation easements)	8 6 31 1 13 1 7 8 2 15 3 5 1 3 69 70
Regional Park	Beaufort County Schools Campus	12
Private Parks/ Recreational Facilities	Leamington Recreation Center (Neighborhood Park) Palmetto Hall Recreation Area (Neighborhood Park) Hilton Head Plantation Spring Lake Area (Neighborhood Park) Hilton Head Plantation Dolphin Head Area (Neighborhood Park) Port Royal Plantation Children's Play Field (Neighborhood Park) Wexford Croquet Court (Neighborhood Park) Sea Pines Harbor Town Liberty Oak (Neighborhood Park) Sea Pines South Beach (Neighborhood Park) Sea Pines Six Oaks Park (Neighborhood Park) Hilton Head Plantation Whooping Crane Conservancy (Special Use Park) Hilton Head Plantation Cypress Conservancy (Special Use Park) Shipyard Beach Club (Special Use Park) Port Royal Plantation Beach Club (Special Use Park) Long Cove Community Dock (Special Use Park) Sea Pines Newhall Preserve (Special Use Park) Sea Pines Forest Preserve (Special Use Park) Sea Pines Deer Island Park Preserve (Special Use Park) Sea Pines Baynard Ruins Park (Special Use Park) Port Royal Plantation Croquet Court	varies
Linear Park	None at this time	0

Note 1: Parks in Table 10.1 with an asterisk (\*) can also be considered a Neighborhood Park.

Note 2: The school campus is considered regional in nature due to the stadium.

Note 3: The Northridge property is considered a Special Use Park; however, there are restrictive covenants on the property that prevent certain uses.

## 10.4 Park Development Guidelines

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is moving away from recommending national standards and encouraging communities to create their own unique standards or guidelines for public and private parks and recreational facilities. Since Hilton Head Island has a diverse wealth of recreation opportunities and a unique population that is divided among permanent residents and visitors to the Island, using generic park standards or guidelines is not appropriate.

Table 10.2 shows new park development guidelines and future park needs. The guidelines include park category, general park size, population served, existing parks in 2009, additional parks needed by 2020, and total number of parks needed in 2020, which includes both existing and additional park figures. The calculations for the additional parks needed by 2020 are based on the population projection of 53,300 permanent residents in the year 2020. This population figure was projected by the Town of Hilton Head Island in August 2004 for the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan. In the Neighborhood Park and Community Park categories, the numbers for additional parks have been adjusted to better reflect the Island's unique characteristics, including private facilities and a public beach.

The park numbers shown in Table 10.2 reflect the recommended number of existing and future public parks and do not include parks located in private gated communities. It is unknown if the PUDs plan to expand or construct new parks or facilities for their residents.

The number of Community Parks needed in the year 2020 reflects the use of private facilities and beach. Several of the PUDs and private schools provide recreational facilities that could be accommodated in Community Parks such as rectangular multi-purpose fields and other single purpose fields. The number of additional Community Parks needed by 2020 has been adjusted to reflect this. For every 2 rectangular multi-purpose fields and 2 single-purpose fields in PUDs or at private schools, one Community Park was deducted from the guidelines for the number of parks calculated using the population projection of 53,300 permanent residents.

Park types recommended for expansion can be seen in reviewing the information in Table 10.2 for the Neighborhood Park, Community Park and Regional Park categories. Based on previous assessments, by the year 2020, a total of 2 additional Community Parks, 1 additional Regional Park, and 14 additional Neighborhood Parks were recommended for construction on the Island. The Town will work with residents of individual neighborhoods to determine if there is an interest for a neighborhood park. The number of additional parks needed and the total parks needed by 2020 presented in Table 10.2 in the Neighborhood Park category are based on the population projection of 16,421 permanent residents outside of PUDs. This number was used because the Town does not plan to construct Neighborhood parks inside PUDs. The word “varies” in Table 10.2 indicates the information is not based on population but rather the desire of the Town, the location of the property, and any opportunities available on the property.

Beaufort County adopted the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan in 2006. One of the sections of this plan addresses parks and recreation on a regional level in southern Beaufort County. The Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan is not intended to replace this Recreation Element of the Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan. The Regional Plan has a broad scope of the recreation needs of the entire area while this Recreation Element also includes local and special use parks that serve the needs of the people on Hilton Head Island.

**Table 10.2: New Park Development Guidelines & Future Park Needs**

Park Category	General Size in Acres	Population Served	Existing Number of Parks in 2009	Additional Parks Needed by 2020	Total of Existing & Additional Parks Needed by 2020
Neighborhood	1-5	500-1,000	2	14*	16
Community	20-80	2,000-5,000	6	2	8
Regional	50-85	5,000-20,000	1	1	2
Special Use	1-50	1,000-5,000	16	0	16
Mini	2500sq. ft – 1 acre	Varies	1	Varies	Varies
Linear	Varies	Varies	0	Varies	Varies

\*It should be noted that the need for Neighborhood Parks will fluctuate depending on the requests of each individual neighborhood.

The Town of Hilton Head Island worked with the Beaufort County to assist in the development of the Regional Plan. The Town provided information for the regional plan on the park and recreation needs of the residents of Hilton Head Island. The Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan recommended the Town of Hilton Head Island adopt the following levels of service for a regional park network:

- 12.2 acres of land per 1,000 residents; and
- \$722 of park and recreational facilities per capita

It should be noted this level of service was adapted from a list of existing parks considered regional in nature. With the inclusion of all other existing and future parks the Town of Hilton Head Island is exceeding this level of service.

## **FUNDING SOURCES**

Town Council attempts to minimize reliance on property tax while expanding alternative revenue sources. Several funding sources are used to construct and maintain the Town's park system.

- Parks impact fees were enacted Countywide to provide funding for emerging park needs. Similar to Traffic Impact Fees, parkland purchases and park developments have nearly exhausted the accumulated monies in our Park Impact Fee account. Thus, the Town may consider Interfund borrowing that will be repaid with interest as the Town continues to garner park impact fees through build out.
- Ad valorem property taxes, collected during the fiscal year.
- Sunday Liquor Sales Permit Fees derived from the sale of permits to sell alcohol on Sunday.
- County Contributions such as their bond issue for CIP projects.
- Donations.
- Grants such as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century (TEA-21). TEA-21 and FEMA grants are competed for at the State level but include Federal funds.
- Locals Accommodation Tax (ATAX) grants are derived from a State mandated two- percent tax on short-term rentals, hotels and motel accommodations.
- Beach Fees are derived from an additional two-percent Local Accommodations Tax levied by Town Council. This source provides dedicated funds to beach renourishment and related monitoring, dune refurbishment, maintenance and operations, and new beach parks and access facilities.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) are funds derived from increased assessed value above the baseline assessment when the TIF District was established. These funds may be used for public projects within the District.
- Real Estate Transfer Fee which is .25 of 1% on each real estate transaction in the Town. The funds generated by this fee are dedicated to the Land Acquisition Program and its debt service.
- C-funds derived from State taxes on gasoline which may be obtained via the County Transportation Committee (CTC) for special projects.

## **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- As the population of the Island changes, so does the need for recreational opportunities.
- Guidelines should provide a mechanism to establish a plan to develop future parks and to determine the needs of the community. Several factors should be considered such as population, level of service, and the associated projections. The Comprehensive Plan should provide the foundation to establish the guidelines while recognizing that other factors, such as changing community needs and use trends in order to determine whether or not future parks are necessary.
- Additional funding sources and ways to efficiently utilize the existing funding sources should be considered and reviewed.



## 10.5 Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities

Table 10.3 is an inventory of existing recreational facilities. The extensive list shows the wealth and variety of recreational facilities in the Town both outside and inside Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), giving a more accurate representation of available recreational facilities within the Town. Commercial businesses such as mini-golf, health clubs/fitness centers and tennis clubs were not included in the survey information. Private schools and church facilities were also not included.

Swimming pools and tennis courts located at multi-family developments were also not included in the inventory. These facilities are available to the owners of the multi-family units and their guests, and not to the general public. In the instance of a PUD, swimming pools and tennis courts available to all residents of the PUD were included in the survey and those available to only one group of property owners in the PUD were not counted due to their limited access.

Table 10.3, Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities, shows that the Town has over 60 miles of paved pathways/trails. These pathways link various Town parks and commercial and residential areas of the Island. These pathways service pedestrians by providing access along roadways throughout the Island. The pathways are used by both residents and visitors for transportation and recreation activities such as bicycling, walking, and jogging. In private gated communities there are also paved pathways and trails.

While not limited to non-motorized boat traffic, the County boat landing at Marshland Road is used heavily by people to launch kayaks. Other launching sites exist at private and commercial marinas and docks along the waterfront throughout the Island and were not included in the survey information.

### **ROLE OF PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT**

The majority of the Town's neighborhoods consist of subdivisions that are master-planned with parks and recreation in mind. Parks are located to provide safe and convenient access to recreation opportunities. Most commonly, pathways and parks are privately owned and maintained by property owner's associations (POAs). The Town's current policy is that new development provides for community open space and parks to serve the development's residential population. Pathways located in private developments, which serve the connectivity needs of residents within the development, are not publicly accessible. The Town's pathways are intended to provide connectivity outside the gates to encourage non-motorized travel.

Although privately owned and maintained, their use by the general public cannot be discounted. The facilities provided by PUDs address many of the recreation needs of residents and visitors. Many of the parks are utilized as team sports practice fields when a resident parent serves as coach. Often there are non-resident participants who benefit from the private facilities.

### **ROLE OF SCHOOLS**

Given the high cost of land on Hilton Head Island, it is important that schools serve multiple needs of the community. When community groups or organizations wish to utilize Beaufort County School's fields, gymnasiums or other school facilities for recreation activities, each event must be approved and scheduled through the specific school's principal. A continued strong working relationship with the schools is strategic to providing the most efficient delivery of leisure services.

## **ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

**Beaches:** The Town of Hilton Head Island contains 12 miles of the world's finest beach. The entire beach is public, from the ocean to the high water mark. However, access to the beach may be either public or private. The Town of Hilton Head Island provides beach access at nine different locations:

- Alder Lane Beach Access, off South Forest Beach Drive
- Burkes Beach Access, at the end of Burkes Beach Road
- Chaplin Community Park, off of William Hilton Parkway
- Coligny Beach Park, off Coligny Circle
- Driessen Beach Park, at the end of Bradley Beach Road
- Fish Haul Park, at the end of Beach City Road
- Folly Field Beach Park, off Folly Field Road
- Islanders Beach Park, off Folly Field Road
- Mitchelville Beach Park, off Beach City Road

The beach is used for various recreational activities, including passive beach going, running, cycling, kite flying, surfing, swimming, exercising and numerous other activities. Maintenance of the beach is contracted with a private company that also supplies various equipment and beach items for a fee. Other planned activities include weddings, competitive races and events, religious services and fitness programs occur on the beach during various times. The beach has a significant economic impact to the community, from the creation of jobs associated with the beach and the millions of visitors and users, which is further described in both the Community Facilities and Economic Development Element of this plan.

**Multi-Purpose Pathways:** The Town of Hilton Head Island provides nearly 55 miles of public pathways and nature trails. The pathways are used for both transportation and recreation, by casual cycling and walking. The pathways are continuous through much of the island, providing connectivity to other recreational opportunities, and residential and other commercial centers.

In addition, there are more than 50 miles of pathways and shared roadways within the private developments. These private pathways are for the use of residents and renters of the respective communities and their guests.

Figure 10.1 Existing and Future Parks illustrates the existing and future parks anticipated for the Town.

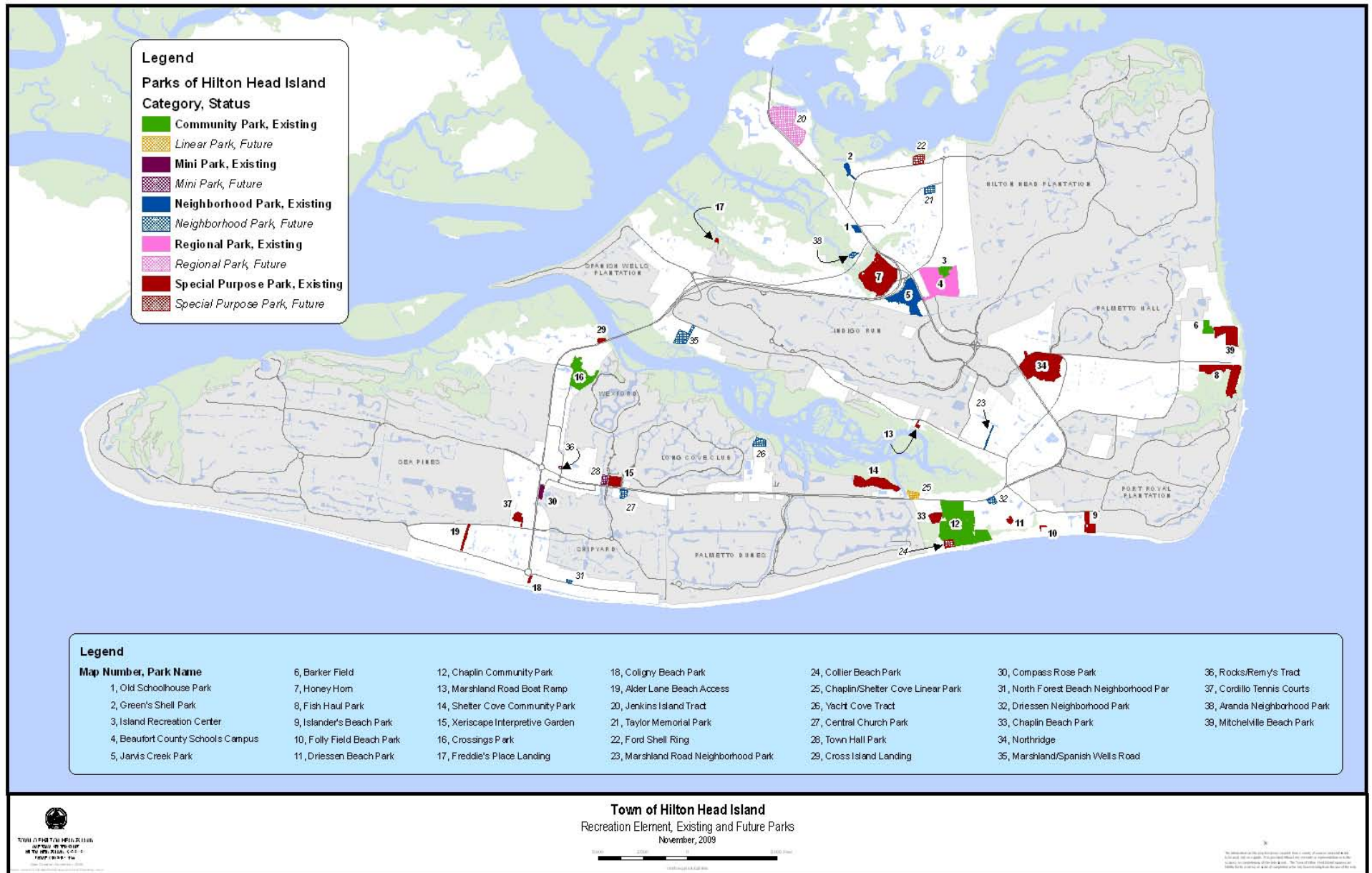
**Table 10.3: Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities**

	Town of HHI	Bft County PALS	HH Schools Campus	Island Rec. Center	Boys & Girls Club	Hilton Head Plantation	Indigo Run	Long Cove Club	Palmetto Dunes	Palmetto Hall	Port Royal Plantation	Sea Pines	Shipyard Plantation	Spanish Wells Plantation	Wexford Plantation	TOTAL
Paved Trails (miles)	55		1.2			10	1.5		4		7	15	10		5	108
Unpaved Trails (miles)	2.5										2	2				6.5
Beach (miles)																13
Rectangular Multi –Purpose Fields	11	5	4	1		1	1					1				24
Single Purpose Fields	3	7	6			1		1		1	1					20
Running Track			1													1
Indoor Basketball Court			5	1	1											7
Outdoor Basketball Court	5	1		3	2	1.5		2			1				1	16.5
Outdoor Tennis Court	8	2	10			33	6	10	25	4	20	59	20	2	6	205
Volleyball Court			1	2		2										5
Public Golf Course ( # o f holes)						36	18		54	36	36	54	27			261
Private Golf Course ( # o f holes)						36	18	18			18	18		9	18	135
Outdoor Swimming Pool				1		1*	3*	1*		1	1*	4*		1	1*	14*
Indoor Swimming Pool												1				1
Playground	6	2	6	1	2	2	4	1	2	1	1	2	1		1	28
Dog Park	1															1
Beach Park	8					1			2		2	2	1			16
Creek Park								1								1
Boat Landing		3							1			1				5
Nature Preserve (Acres)	70**					177					6.5	605				858.5
Gymnasium			4	1	1											6
Community House/Meeting Room ( Square Footage)	2,660			280	280	9,632	3575	14,000			3,500	5,400	4,000	1,500	5,500	50,327
Picnic Areas	22	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	1			1	39
Horse Stables												1				1
Lawn Bowling Court															1	1
Croquet Court											1				1	2
Roller Hockey Facility	1															1
Skateboard Facility	1															1
Outdoor Band/Theater/ Pavilion/Stage									1			2				3
Civic Art Areas									1			2				3
Teen Club					1											1
Rowing/Sailing Center									1							1

\*Of the 14 outdoor swimming pools in this table, 9 have outdoor “kiddy” pools in addition to adult pools.

\*\* This 70 acre nature preserve is the Town-owned Northridge property.

Figure 10.1: Existing and Future Parks



## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- It is important to understand the recreation facilities that are available throughout the Town. The inventory includes both public and private recreational facilities indicating that organizations and individual communities have assumed the responsibility to develop recreational opportunities to meet their needs. This detailed inventory of available recreational opportunities should be used as a tool in determining whether or not adequate facilities are available for the community.
- All organizations and groups, including the Town, School District and private communities and developers should work together when developing park and recreation plans.

## 10.6 Facilities Guidelines

As mentioned earlier, the National Recreation and Park Association is moving away from recommending national standards. The NRPA is advocating communities create unique guidelines for recreational facilities that will accommodate each community's individual needs. Guidelines for several regularly-used recreational facilities in Hilton Head Island have been developed by Town staff using information from a variety of sources such as public input, other communities' guidelines or standards, and the National Recreation and Park Association.

These guidelines are not rigid and can fluctuate depending on the community's recreation needs, population and the availability of land to build new facilities or renovate existing facilities. The total number of facilities used in these guidelines includes facilities located inside and outside private gated communities. By including these, the total number of recreational facilities is more accurately related to the total population of the Island. Some of the more popular facilities are described below.

Multi-purpose rectangular fields are typically used for sports such as football, baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and rugby. Currently there are 24 multi-purpose rectangular fields in the Town with 3 of those in gated communities. Since these fields accommodate a variety of sports the number of users that each field can serve is a cumulative total of 5,000 people.

There are currently 20 single purpose fields in the Town with 4 of those in gated communities. An example of a single purpose field is a baseball/softball field. Since these fields accommodate one type of sport the number of users that each field can serve is a cumulative total of 3,000 people.

There are a total of 23.5 basketball courts in the Town with 5.5 of those in gated communities. This number is a combination of 7 indoor and 16.5 outdoor basketball courts. One basketball court (indoor or outdoor) can serve approximately 5,000 people.

Tennis is a popular recreational activity in the Town. There are a total of 205 tennis courts on the Island with 185 of those in gated communities. This figure does not include commercial tennis facilities. One tennis court can serve approximately 4,000 people.

There are many swimming pools in the Town. There are 14 outdoor swimming pools in gated communities and 1 year-round indoor pool outside the gates. It is important to note that the outdoor swimming pool located at the Island Recreation Center converts to an indoor pool during the winter months with a dome that is placed over the pool facility. This pool is counted in the outdoor category. Of the 14 locations reporting outdoor pools, 9 also have outdoor "kiddy" pools. One pool can serve approximately 20,000 people.

The need for additional swimming pools has recently been a topic of discussion with residents and recreation organizations on the Island. There is one swimming pool for community-wide use located at the Island Recreation Center. Although there appears to be a sufficient number of limited access swimming pools Island residents believe another community-wide swimming pool should be constructed.

There are 28 playgrounds located in the Town with 14 of those in gated communities. One playground can serve approximately 2,000 people.

The waterways surrounding Hilton Head Island and the 13 miles of beaches draw residents and tourists to the Island to live, work, and visit the beautiful natural environment. There are 16 beach parks located on Hilton Head Island, 8 of these parks are owned and maintained by the Town. The number of people served by one beach park will fluctuate based on the park size, proximity to residential areas, and the number of parking spaces available at the park. In addition to the private and Town-owned Beach Parks there are several beach access points in established subdivisions throughout the Island, such as the North Forest Beach neighborhood, where residents can access the beach.

In and around Hilton Head Island there are 5 boat landings/ramps; 3 are county boat ramps and 2 are privately owned. Based on the available parking and the size of the boat landing, 1 boat landing can accommodate between approximately 1,000 to 8,000 people, depending on parking.

Outdoor recreation activities abound on Hilton Head Island and picnicking is a popular activity for both residents and visitors alike. The Town has 39 picnic areas with 12 of these in gated communities. Each picnicking area can serve approximately 2,000 people. Table 10.4: Future Parks and Suggested Facility Locations, indicates types of facilities and locations for future parks.

**Table 10.4: Future Parks and Suggested Facility Locations**

Park Category	Future Parks As Designated in the CIP	Suggested Facilities from the Public
Neighborhood	TBD (See Note 1)	Playgrounds Picnic Areas Basketball Courts Tennis Courts
Community	Yacht Cove Island Recreation Aquatics Center	Multi Purpose Fields (See Note 2) Swimming Pool with Kiddie Pool Indoor & Outdoor Volleyball Court Jogging Track With Exercise Stops Basketball Courts Tennis Courts
Regional	TBD	TBD
Special Use	Collier Beach Park Ford Shell Ring Sailing & Rowing Center	Sailing/Rowing Center Fishing Pier for Fresh & Salt Water More Boat Ramps/Landings
Mini	Rock's/ Remy's Tract	Water Fountains Picnic Areas Public Art
Linear	Chaplin Linear Park All Pathways	Boardwalks with Water Views Lighting, Street Furniture, etc.

Note 1: To be determined after coordinating with neighborhoods who desires neighborhood parks.

Note 2: Many organizations have requested dedicated single purpose fields. It is the Town's desire to create as many multi-purpose fields as possible in order to supply the needs of the various ball teams. Better scheduling and lighting of the existing fields could result in postponing the need for construction of more fields. This needs to be monitored annually.

TBD: To be determined



## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- Guidelines should be considered when making recommendations for future park development. However, they should be used as a tool with the consideration that our population and visitors may have needs that are unique to the character of the Island community.

### 10.7 Park Maintenance Tasks and Levels of Service

Maintenance of parks and recreational facilities within the Town is done by both the Town and Beaufort County through shared informal agreements which may be formalized in the future as intergovernmental agreements. Beaufort County maintains the active recreational facilities such as multi-purpose fields and baseball and softball fields. The Town of Hilton Head Island Facilities Management Division maintains the passive parks and beach parks located on Town properties.

There is a high expectation of residents and visitors of Hilton Head Island for excellent recreational facilities. To maintain the expected level of service requires an impact on fiscal resources. Redevelopment and development of new parks and facilities should be considered in annual budgets to ensure that the long term maintenance is addressed.

The Town also maintains a beach patrol franchise agreement with Shore Beach Services for patrolling and servicing the 13 miles of beaches on the Island. The Town may want to investigate ways to work with Beaufort County to have improved maintenance to meet the expectations and evaluate a ability of Town's Facilities Management Division to assume all maintenance and operation of parks.

#### **MAINTENANCE TASKS**

Maintenance tasks are divided into 7 major categories described below and are performed by both the Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County to sustain a high level of service for the residents and visitors of Hilton Head Island.

##### **Park Landscape Maintenance**

Turf areas are mowed on a regular basis and sidewalks, decks, and parking lots are cleared with leaf blowing machines and edging on an as-needed basis. Pruning of trees and shrubs is performed when necessary to maintain an orderly appearance. Spraying for insect and disease control, weed control (performed by manual, mechanical, or chemical means) and mulching or pine strawing is performed throughout the year.

##### **Pathways/Sidewalks/Trails Maintenance**

Pathways are maintained in a safe and neat appearance at all times. This includes edging, and clearing tree limbs and branches, mowing shoulders and removing other objects interfering with a clear pathway.

##### **Playground Maintenance**

Grass, weeds, and other vegetation is hand-pulled from playground areas as needed. No chemicals are used in playground areas. All maintenance work in playground areas is performed during daylight hours.

##### **Ball Field Maintenance**

Turf at athletic fields is maintained by the County. Disease and insect problems are treated immediately upon observation and the irrigation systems are maintained in proper working order at all times.

##### **Park Janitorial Services**

Restroom facilities at park locations are opened and cleaned daily with additional cleanings on weekends, holidays, and during the visitor high season between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

**Litter Control**

All litter and debris is removed prior to mowing or any other landscape services performed at Town parks and recreational facilities. Trash receptacles at park locations are emptied daily.

**Street Sweeping**

All Town owned parking lots and entry roads into parks and recreational facilities operated by the Town are swept weekly.

**Recycling**

The Town has established a beach and park recycling pilot program at Islander's and Coligny Beach Parks, as well as Chaplin Park to serve the highest concentration of Island residents. A solar powered trash receptacle with a recycling kiosk will also be installed in Coligny Beach Park.

**Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Responses from the Community Survey indicated that the community is satisfied with the existing recreational facilities and parks; however, would like to ensure that they are maintained to ensure high quality and character.
- Fiscal responsibility and the community's willingness to pay for potential increase in costs associated with the redevelopment or development of new or existing facilities and to maintain a certain level of quality should be included as a consideration when making policy and planning decisions.
- The Town should coordinate maintenance standards and other related maintenance issues, including a formalized agreement with Beaufort County and Shore Beach Services to verify that all organizations and departments involved in maintenance of recreational facilities are operating under the same standards.

**10.8 Recreation Programs**

Recreation programs for children, adults and senior citizens in Hilton Head Island are offered through the Island Recreation Association and Beaufort County Parks and Leisure Services (PALS). The Island Recreation Association is a non-profit organization which provides and coordinates public recreation programs, activities and special events in the Town. Beaufort County PALS is a division of the county government which provides recreational facilities and activities in Beaufort County.

The Island Recreation Association maintains the Island Recreation Center located on Wilborn Road on the north end of the Island. As a Town facility, it is being reviewed for recapitalization and maintenance by the Town in the future. This facility and several other recreational facilities in the Town are home to many of the programs offered by the Association. Programs offered by the association are grouped into categories which include preschool programs, youth programs, youth athletics, adult and senior programs, adult athletics, aquatics and special events.

Pre-school programs are for children between the ages of 2 and 5, starting ages vary based on the program. Some of the programs offered include discovery club preschool, mother's morning out, storybook hour, art classes, kitchen/cooking classes and various sports.

Youth programs are for children in kindergarten through 5th grade. Some of the programs offered include kid's night out, girl's night out, after school recreation club, vacation club, summer camp, and birthday parties.

Youth athletics are for children between the ages of 6 and 12, some ages vary based on the activity. Some of the youth athletic programs offered are basketball, roller hockey league, flag football, soccer league, soccer camp, softball, junior golf school, karate, tennis, and baseball.

Adult athletics are offered through the Island Recreation Center and include: dodge ball league, basketball league, soccer leagues, tennis leagues, kickball league, and jazzercise classes.

Aquatics programs are offered to a variety of age groups from babies to master swimmers. Aquatic programs offered at the Island Recreation Center are: group swim lessons, water babies, private swim lessons, lifeguard training, masters swimming, Hilton Head aquatics swim team, open/lap swimming, water fitness classes and recreational swim club.

The Island Recreation Association also offers a variety of special events held during the year at various facilities throughout the Island. Some special events include: golf tournaments, a water festival, tennis tournaments, Wingfest, oyster roasts, and the Summer Jams concert series.

The Senior Center (SHARE) is a division of the Island Recreation Association and offers a variety of educational, recreation and social activities to adults over 50 years of age.

These activities are offered at various locations including the senior center (SHARE), the Island Recreation Center, St. Andrew Methodist Church and the Player's Club. The examples listed in the Adult Programs category are just a sample of the activities offered through the senior center. There also are regularly scheduled daily activities at the senior center facility such as bowling, group bicycle rides, table tennis, and bridge games. Numerous seminars and discussion groups are scheduled throughout the year which includes a wellness series, guest author series, gardening series, and financial seminars. Day and extended trips are organized through the senior center and they include trips to places of interests in the region such as Charleston, Beaufort, Kiawah Island, and Savannah and Macon, Georgia.

Beaufort County PALS offers youth and adult athletic programs on the Island. Throughout the year PALS coordinates adult soccer leagues and various youth sports leagues: baseball and softball, soccer, football, cheerleading, and basketball.

The Boys & Girls Club of the Lowcountry is an organization that exists solely for the benefit of children. It is funded by a variety of sources, but mostly depends on the community including churches, civic organizations, businesses, local foundations, and individuals. They provide such programs as Character and Leadership Development; Education and Career Development; Health and Life Skills; the Arts; and Sports, Fitness and Recreation.

Many of the private gated communities throughout the Town offer a variety of recreational programs for their residents and guests of residents. Examples of these programs include summer day camps, dancing lessons, fitness classes, social or special interest clubs, and holiday themed parties for adults and children. There are also a number of private sports organizations, such as Gator Football, Dixie Youth Baseball, Public Tennis Inc. and others, that provide programming for a variety of sports activities such as baseball, soccer, swimming, boating, football, tennis, golf, and martial arts.

## **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- There are various programs available on the Island that cross different population and socio-economic groups. As our population changes, community programs and services should be evaluated to ensure that the needs of our community are being met. The variations in programs provide social interaction and provide connectivity among members of the community.
- It is recommended the Town continue to participate with local recreation organizations to develop recreation programs that will meet the needs of the residents and visitors of the Island, including: baseball, football, tennis, soccer, running, sailing, and martial arts.

## 10.9 Goals and Implementation Strategies

Key issues of recreation were identified based on public input that was received throughout this process and data that was collected by Town staff. Recreation needs are not isolated; therefore, the implementation strategies should be approached regionally and collectively, integrating a palette of solutions.

### Goals

#### **Goal 10.1 Recreation Needs**

- A. Continue to expand the public recreation system by providing adequate facilities to meet the needs of a broad spectrum of the Island population (including visitors) while maintaining sensitivity to the specific needs of the Island.
- B. Participate with local recreation organizations in the development of programs and facilities to meet the needs of the resident and visitor populations of the Island.
- C. Continue working with Beaufort County and the Town of Bluffton to ensure a regional park system on the mainland is developed that will serve the recreational needs of the residents and visitors of Southern Beaufort County.

#### **Goal 10.2 Protection of Unique Features**

- A. Acquire conservation and park lands as a means to preserve natural and cultural resources for educational, interpretive, and passive recreation uses.
- B. Expand national recognition of Town's recreational facilities, programs, and opportunities such as beaches, pathways and cycling.

#### **Goal 10.3 Neighborhood Parks**

- A. Provide neighborhood parks where needed and desired.

#### **Goal 10.4 Pathways**

- A. Continue improving and expanding the existing network of multi-use pathways throughout the Island enabling residents and visitors to access recreational areas, shopping centers, schools and businesses by non-motorized forms of transportation.

#### **Goal 10.5 Maintenance**

- A. Continue working with Beaufort County to provide the high standards of maintenance Island residents and visitors expect from this community.
- B. Budget for and provide cost effective park maintenance and operations in order to maintain the expected level of service for all Town-owned parks.

#### **Goal 10.6 Funding Sources**

- A. Continue to seek and utilize a variety of funding sources in order to attain required parks at build-out.

## **Implementation Strategies**

### **10.1 Recreation Needs**

- A. Be proactive in consideration of leisure services based on current park and recreation needs assessment.
- B. Continue participation with local recreation organizations in the development of programs and facilities to meet the needs of the diverse populations of the Island.
- C. Work with appropriate agencies to ensure the recreational needs of the Island's various age groups, specifically youth and elderly residents are met through adequate facilities and programs.
- D. Include within the park system a combination of all park types and strive to achieve the park guidelines as stated in this element by providing the number of future parks needed based on population projections.
- E. Encourage public participation in the ongoing development, implementation, and evaluation of recreational facilities and programs.
- F. Improve and expand existing parks to accommodate additional facility needs.
- G. Planning for parks should begin as appropriate Town-owned properties are identified for such a use, including locating specific facilities within future parks.

### **10.2 Protection of Unique Features**

- A. Coordinate with various agencies including Beaufort County Rural & Critical Lands Board and property owners to identify and purchase undeveloped property for parks and recreation lands as needed.
- B. Acquire properties located in areas of need for both passive and active uses, and for access points to waterways.
- C. Support accessible regional parks which complement the local park system.
- D. Seek recognition as a place that offers unique recreation facilities, programs and opportunities.

### **10.3 Neighborhood Parks**

- A. Work directly with residents of neighborhoods to determine a need or desire for a neighborhood park.

### **10.4 Pathways**

- A. Continually make improvements to the existing pathway system and provide new pathway links.
- B. Build pathways when improving or building roads and in conjunction with utility projects.
- C. Educate residents and visitors on the use of bicycles and the rules and responsibilities of bicycling.
- D. Educate residents and visitors on the use pathways.
- E. Link new parks with the multi-use pathway system.

### **10.5 Maintenance**

- A. Determine if the Town's Facilities Management Division should increase park maintenance responsibilities.
- B. Examine the need to create a Parks and Recreation Department to supplement or replace those services provided by Beaufort County.
- C. Work with the County to ensure high quality recreational facilities through proper maintenance.

### **10.6 Funding Sources**

- A. Apply for Federal and State grants for park construction.
- B. Continue to seek private donations and co-operative agreements.
- C. Continue to evaluate Park Impact Fee Program to determine its adequacy.
- D. Increase park maintenance funding proportionately to increases in park construction.
- E. Seek additional funding sources.

# 11 Priority Investment

*Public infrastructure projects will be prioritized and provide coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.*

## Introduction

The purpose of the Priority Investment Element is to tie the capital improvement needs identified in other elements to forecasted revenues for the next ten years. It is, in essence, a ten-year Capital Improvements Plan that is meant to guide the Town's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and annual budgeting processes.

### **South Carolina Priority Investment Act (PIA)**

In June 2007, the governor signed into law the South Carolina Priority Investment Act (PIA). The PIA consists of amendments to the 1994 Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act. One of the amendments adds the Priority Investment Element to the list of required elements for local comprehensive plans. The PIA states the following regarding this new element: "A priority investment element [is required] that analyzes the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends the projects for expenditure of those funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools. The recommendation of those projects for public expenditure must be done through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies. For the purposes of this item, "adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies" means those counties, municipalities, public service districts, school districts, public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and other public entities that are affected by or have planning authority over the public project. For the purposes of this item, "coordination" means written notification by the local planning commission or its staff to adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies of the proposed projects and the opportunity for adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies to provide comment to the planning commission or its staff concerning the proposed projects. Failure of the planning commission or its staff to identify or notify an adjacent or relevant jurisdiction or agency does not invalidate the local comprehensive plan and does not give rise to a civil cause of action."

### 11.1 Process

To prepare the list of public infrastructure projects, Town departments review recommendations of adopted plans and initiatives to develop a list of projects for the Capital Improvements Program. A list of capital improvements based on needs identified in the Comprehensive Plans as well other adopted Town plans needed to maintain existing service levels and repair/replace obsolete or worn out facilities should be developed. The result of this process is a 10-year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) (Exhibit 1). The projects are listed by category, project costs, funding sources, project schedule.

Since the Town currently operates under a 10-Year CIP there is no need to retool the entire process to meet the requirements of the PIA. However, a routing process for information, developed each year during the CIP process, should be established that provides the opportunity for other jurisdictions to review and provide comments back to the Town. Finally, a methodology that requires a systematic approach to address capital project needs may be outlined as a strategy in this Element.



## 11.2 10-Year Capital Improvements Plan

There is a strong link between the Town's Comprehensive Plan and its Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Coordination of the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan is a major objective of the planning process. All elements of the Comprehensive Plan should be consistent and the Comprehensive Plan should be financially feasible, including capital costs as well as costs for maintenance and operations. Financial feasibility is determined using professionally accepted methodologies and applies to the 10-year planning period, which is the scope of the CIP. In accordance with State Law, the proposed CIP for each fiscal year is developed by staff for review and recommendation to the Town's Planning Commission. The pathways and parks section is also reviewed by the Town's Parks and Recreation Commission. The Planning Commission recommends the proposed CIP to Town Council for adoption during the CIP Budget Workshop around May of each year. Projects contained in the Town's CIP relate to roads, parks government facilities, park facilities, pathways, drainage improvements and beach renourishment. Recent CIP projects have included the construction of Compass Rose Park, redevelopment of Coligny Beach Park, realignment of Office Park and Wild Horse Roads, as well as the construction of a Fire and Rescue Training Center. Additional public investment in projects that address emerging technology such as fiber optics, and wireless infrastructure may provide opportunities to expand economic development and improve market position to attract residents and visitors may be considered in future CIPs.

### The Comprehensive Plan and the CIP

Specific capital improvements are routinely planned for and financed in the Town's Annual Ten-Year Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The Ten-Year CIP is internally consistent with the implementation planning time frame of this Comprehensive Plan. The CIP is a well-established program and has successfully served the Town's needs for many years. It is intended that the CIP be utilized as a principal method for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The current adopted Ten-Year CIP is provided at the end of this document. In this regard, projects proposed in the annual CIP are reviewed for consistency with the adopted Comprehensive Plan and certified as such by the Planning Commission.

In meeting the needs of the Town's future growth and redevelopment, certain capital improvements could increase the tax burden for Town residents. In order to minimize this burden, the Town will continue to explore new programs to ensure that new growth and change assumes economic responsibility for its impact. The Town should maximize the use of equitable funding methods, such as impact fees, user fees, special assessments, taxing districts, and the like, to accommodate the costs of new development or redevelopment, and to ensure the lowest possible tax burden on Town residents.

### CIP Performance Management

Each year many citizens and service providers call for the Town to address a growing list of capital needs. The Town must separate the needs from the wants. The Town must allocate its resources wisely within economic constraints and prevailing priorities to develop and manage capital resources in the following key areas:

- Preserve, protect, and enhance economic prosperity
- Maintain competitiveness in the market place
- Protect quality of life
- Protect natural resources
- Create a sense of place

It is imperative that we provide comprehensive, sustainable solutions to resource challenges. It is suggested that the annual allocation of capital resources requires these key efforts:

1. Development of a Strategic Capital Plan laying out broad goals and strategic objectives for the next ten years;
2. Development of an Annual Performance Plan setting annual targets to move toward strategic goals and objectives;

3. Developing an annual Performance Report summarizing actual progress achieved toward goals and objectives.

The Strategic Capital Plan, the Annual Performance Plan, and the annual Performance Report comprise the total Capital Improvements Plan performance management package.

### **The CIP Principles**

The approach that the Town envisions for its CIP reflects “integrated resource management.” The benefit of an integrated approach is that it requires one to think about resources allocation, development, and management in the context of a larger system rather than a single project. This facilitates the search for comprehensive and integrated solutions to achieve objectives set by all concerned parties. By taking into account a multitude of projects over a given area as opposed to concentrating on a single project on one project site, it becomes possible to integrate a complex array of public values, institutional policies and priorities, regulatory procedures, planning criteria, public participation, and private sector business interests. Integrated capital resource management highlights four key concepts that encapsulate the CIP Principles.

1. Systems Approach. In order to solve problems comprehensively, all major aspects of the natural and human systems need to be accounted for. This includes the hydrology, geology, ecology, man-made systems, and how they interact with one another. Systems models help predict how changes in one or more parts of the system affect the other parts of the system given the interdependence among elements. A project area framework facilitates evaluation of a range of project options simultaneously to determine the best combination of projects to achieve multiple goals over the entire area rather than examining each potential project in isolation from others.

2. Geographic Integration. It is important to define the geographic boundaries that are potentially affected by or that could affect a project and to examine the project in the context of a larger geographic area. Projects typically impact water quantity or water quality. The watershed is an appropriate geographic area to look at upstream and downstream impacts of a project. By enlarging the area of consideration – for example, to a watershed, coastal zone, view shed, or transportation zone -- it becomes possible to examine the potential for project synergies and tradeoffs among all resource elements in that area. Jarvis Creek Park is a great example.

3. Balance Across Multiple Uses or Functions. Considering the many elements of a project illuminates a full range of ways in which land, infrastructure, and natural resources are used. Typically, there are many potential uses for Town resources, some competing and some complementary. Each use generates requirements for funding. Any project should be evaluated in the context of the broad range of needs in the project area or “problem-shed” so that conscious decisions are made about tradeoffs and opportunities for synergies are availed when they make sense. The objective is to seek greater balance across objectives. Interdisciplinary views and collaboration become germane to identifying how best to achieve multiple objectives.

4. Collaborative Approach. Clearly, collaboration is essential to bring together the expertise on natural and man made systems over the appropriate geographic area, knowledge of problems that exist, and the range of current and potential needs for various resources. Collaboration involves Town staff and its expertise in engineering, planning, natural resource protection, public safety, and urban design. Collaboration can involve several Federal, State, County and local agencies, the private sector, and interest groups and can take many forms. Each participating entity will bring its own legal authorities, skills and knowledge, history, and contributions to the project scope and effect funding levels. It is clear that the Town will not have complete control with various aspects of project planning, design, implementation, and management will vary depending on the nature of potential solutions to the problems and whether or not the Town has relevant expertise.

**Current 10-Year CIP (2010)**

The projects in the 10-year CIP represent the best efforts of Town departments to identify capital needs to address existing deficiencies and future needs. Goals of the CIP and Priority Investment should focus on sustainable development, growth management, economic development and redevelopment and natural resource protection. Under the current Town process, inclusion of projects in the 10-year CIP does not connote de-facto approval. In most cases further analysis, prioritization, and review of projects is required prior to the actual implementation of the capital projects.

The results from the 2008 Town of Hilton Head Island Community Planning Survey provide an indication of where citizens feel resources should be allocated as summarized in Table 11.1, Recommended Resource Allocation:

**Table 11.1: Recommended Resource Allocation**

	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important
Disaster recovery planning	57.6%	30.4%	11.3%	0.7%
Roadway improvements	32.4%	49.5%	17.0%	1.1%
Pathway/sidewalk improvements	26.7%	34.7%	36.0%	2.7%
Intersection improvements	25.2%	38.0%	31.6%	5.3%
Expansion of recreational services	15.1%	26.9%	42.3%	15.8%
Expansion of parks	13.3%	22.5%	38.7%	25.4%
Expanded educational opportunities	26.5%	30.7%	32.7%	10.1%
Stormwater/drainage improvements	39.1%	40.0%	19.4%	1.5%
Economic development	27.2%	40.7%	24.6%	7.5%
Historic preservation	31.7%	35.1%	26.2%	7.0%

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Planning Survey 2008

A rough analysis based upon the survey response provides information that can be used to assist in prioritizing projects and resource allocation in upcoming CIP planning efforts. Table 11.2, CIP Driving Force, outlines the areas in which citizens felt were important to focus the Town's CIP efforts. Items were ranked on a scale from 1 to 10. The top three include: disaster recovery planning, roadway improvements and Stormwater/ drainage improvement.

**Table 11.2: CIP Driving Force (Scale of 1 to 10)**

(Positive = Very Important + Extremely Important) (Negative = not at all important ) (Neutral = Somewhat Important)	Positive Alignment	Negative Alignment	Neutral
<b>Q9a Disaster recovery planning</b>	8.8	0.1	1.1
Q9b Roadway improvements	8.2	0.1	1.7
Q9h Stormwater/drainage improvements	7.9	0.2	1.9
Q9i Economic development	6.8	0.8	2.5
Q9j Historic preservation	6.7	0.7	2.6
Q9d Intersection improvements	6.3	0.5	3.2
Q9c Pathway/sidewalk improvements	6.1	0.3	3.6
Q9g Expanded educational opportunities	5.7	1.0	3.3
Q9e Expansion of recreational services	4.2	1.6	4.2
Q9f Expansion of parks	3.6	2.5	3.9

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Community Planning Survey 2008

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The strong link that exists between the Capital Improvement Program and the Comprehensive Plan helps to ensure that public investment in municipal facilities and infrastructure is coordinated with the Town's projected growth and development. This relationship is important and should be maintained during the development of future Capital Improvement Plans.
- During the annual review of the CIP the goals and implementation strategies adopted in the Comprehensive Plan should be used to assist in the development of project identification and prioritization.
- As strong CIP directs where development and redevelopment could be supported through infrastructure improvements.
- The Town's 10-Year CIP, expanded to include project costs detailed revenue sources will need to be routed to other agencies having planning jurisdictions for review. The reason is primarily for informational purposes but could provide opportunities to reduce projects expenses and provide cost sharing for projects located in the same areas.
- There is an opportunity to develop a formal process or methodology to prioritize capital improvements required to achieve and maintain desired levels of service and to repair and replace public facilities for recommendation in the CIP. This methodology should take into account both capital costs and the cost to operate and maintain proposed capital improvements in order to achieve the best use of funds and potential overall cost savings. In addition, there may be some benefit to grouping like projects, providing an opportunity for conceptual review of projects with the community and area agencies before being added to the CIP list.
- A thorough inventory of revenues and past expenditures for public projects will provide an indication of how projects were prioritized in the past. Allocation of future revenues for public projects requires careful consideration to meet the needs of the community.
- Consideration of integrating communication infrastructure and other emerging technologies into the CIP may provide as opportunities to leverage public investments and improve economic development and communications for residents and visitors.

### 11.3 CIP Revenues and Expenditures

The list of capital projects and projected revenues sources over the next 10-years is included in Exhibit 11.1: 2010-2019 CIP Summary.

There are many different funding sources incorporated into the Town's CIP Budget. They are summarized in Table 11.3.

**Table 11.3: Town of Hilton Head Island Fiscal Year 2010 CIP Funding Sources**

CIP Funding Source	CIP Funding Source
Traffic Impact Fees	General Obligation (GO) Bonds
Parks Impact Fees	Revenue Bonds
Interfund Borrowing	Grants
Fund Balance (Prior Year Funding)	Accommodation Tax (ATAX)
New Fiscal Year Taxes	Beach Fees
Sunday Liquor Sales Permit Fees	Hospitality Tax
Storm Water Utility (SWU) Fees	Tax Increment Finance (TIF)
County Contributions	Lease Fund
Donations	In Lieu of Open Space

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island Capital Improvements Program - FY2010-2019

## Implications for the Comprehensive Plan

- The Town has a comprehensive CIP that includes multiple funding sources. Fluxuations in revenues should be taken into account when developing the CIP and the one-year capital plan.
- Every opportunity should be explored to identify new revenue sources and refine information listed for capital projects.
- All funding sources should be reviewed periodically to provide an accurate account of projected and actual revenues.
- A detailed account of projected revenues from all available sources will allow decision makers appropriate short term or one year capital budget decision within the context of the long-term 10 year CIP program.

## 11.4 Goals and Implementation Strategies

### Goals

#### 11.1 Process

- A. The goal is to prioritize public infrastructure projects to the extent practical through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.
- B. The goal is to provide cost savings and/or quality improvements for projects by coordinating the provision of public services with other local government jurisdictions.

#### 11.2 10-Year Capital Improvements Plan

- A. The goal is to provide the community with necessary services and facilities and maintain sufficient flexibility to meet the challenges associated with growth.
- B. The goal is to develop and review the Town's 10-Year CIP and 1-Year Capital Plan based recommendations of projects from approved Town Plans.
- C. The goal is to focus the CIP and Priority Investment on sustainable development, growth management, economic development, encouraging redevelopment and natural resource protection.
- D. The goal is to manage and modern infrastructure so that it becomes more efficient while it serves the needs of the community.
- E. The goal is to enhance the Town's market position by exploring methods to improve communication and technology infrastructure.
- F. The goal is to provide for needs of all segments of the population.
- G. The goal is to provide for existing and future trends in land use, communication technology, transportation, and related fields to remain competitive and economically viable in the 21st century.
- H. The goal is to provide adequate infrastructure such as a safe, effective and efficient regional road network through planning and inter-jurisdictional coordination.

#### 11.3 CIP Revenues and Expenditures

- A. The goal is to provide appropriate services to residents and guests
- B. The goal is to develop revenue sources to fund service delivery.
- C. The goal is to provide cost savings by coordinating the provision of public services with other local government.
- D. The goal is to designation areas of the Town as Priority Investment Zones based on identified needs of improving existing conditions or addressing specific planning issues.

## **Implementation Strategies**

### **11.1 Process**

- A. Organize and carry out specific area plans in a coordinated effort to address specific planning issues such as economic development, appearance standards, transportation alternatives, and affordable housing.
- B. Update and circulate the Capital Needs Assessment Plan (CNAP) to review and identify relevant and necessary development and public facilities that should be considered for the CIP.
- C. Review and update the LMO (Land Management Ordinance) to ensure standards reflect the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan including, but not limited to, cultural preservation, Island character, development quality, resource protection, housing affordability and economic development.
- D. Continue Emergency Planning coordination with Beaufort County and South Carolina Emergency Preparedness Division to adequately plan for hurricanes and other potential disasters.
- E. Provide for allowances in the LMO for potential new energy and sustainability endeavors.
- F. Coordinate major capital improvements with other nearby governmental jurisdictions where possible. Coordination may include techniques such as joint funding of capital improvements, shared use agreements, or shared maintenance or operations agreements. Coordination should also include consultation during the development of each Comprehensive Plan update and during the development of the annual CIP.
- G. Coordinate the Capital Improvements Program with any and all agencies that provide public facilities to the Town, including the Public Service Districts, Beaufort County, pertinent regional and state agencies, and the Lowcountry Council of Governments. The Town will also participate in the plans of any agency providing public facilities within the Town to ensure coordination in the Capital Improvements Program budgeting process.
- H. The Town will coordinate the provision of public services and operations amongst its various departments.
- I. Continue to work with SCDOT, Lowcountry Council of Governments, Beaufort and Jasper Counties and other agencies to enhance transportation planning and facilities in the region, focused upon the following:
  - i. Identification of roadway improvements in future updates of the STIP (State Transportation Improvements Plan).
  - ii. Long-term planning for state highways that support the goals of the Town and region.
  - iii. Design of state highways that support the goals of the Town of Hilton Head Island.
  - iv. Identify alternative transportation options and funding sources.

### **11.2 10-Year Capital Improvements Plan**

- A. Prepare and update a 10-Year CIP on an annual basis that includes funding options and coordinates with the Land Use, Transportation, Community Facilities and other elements and components of the Comprehensive Plan.
- B. Conduct a review of community needs each year and analyze potential revenues to balance the proposed Capital Improvements Program costs.
- C. Evaluate public facility demands by new development or redevelopment on a project-by-project basis to assure that capital facilities are provided concurrent with development.
- D. Evaluate and update as applicable the inter-local agreement for sewer facilities. The review shall include an examination of residents not served and anticipated cost to provide service.
- E. Projects will be identified that achieve specific program goals including sustainable development, growth management, economic development and redevelopment and natural resource protection.
- F. Coordinate with service providers to install/enhance communication systems and infrastructure to the latest emerging technologies.



### 11.3 CIP Revenues and Expenditures

- A. Estimate the impacts of continued operations and maintenance for all proposed facilities as part of the development of the Capital Improvements portion of the annual budget.
- B. Update impact fee studies on a periodic basis to assure that fees remain appropriate to capital needs caused by new development or redevelopment.
- C. Evaluate as applicable recreation fee schedules. The review shall include an examination of resident and nonresident recreation fees.
- D. Annually evaluate reinstituting the C oligny be ach pa rking f ee. The review s hall include a n examination of resident and nonresident beach parking fees.
- E. Evaluate the budget impact through the established Capital Improvements Program process to fund such public facility improvements, spreading the impact over the Ten-Year Capital Improvements Program time period to assure financial feasibility including long term maintenance and operational cost.
- F. Develop revenue sources within the Town's powers to fund service delivery.
- G. The following items will should be addressed when considering funding of CIP projects:
  - i. Identify needed capital improvement(s);
  - ii. Identify costs of capital improvement(s), including maintenance and operational costs; and
  - iii. Identify funding support for the improvement(s)

**Figure 11.1: Town of Hilton Head 2010-2019 CIP Summary**

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM FY 2010 FUNDING SUMMARY (Post PC CIP Committee)										
			In Bid or Obligated	SLIDE	NEW	CHANGE				
	THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS									
	FY	IMPACT	PRIOR YEAR	2010 FISCAL	BEACH	SWU	HOSP	TIF	OTHER	
	2010	FEES	FUNDING	YEAR TAXES	FEE	FEE	TAX		FUNDS	
<b>A PATHWAYS</b>										
		Traffic								Impact Fees, TIF & Taxes
1 PATHWAY REHABILITATION	170		Recurring	170						
2 LAGOON ROAD	165	71	45					94		
3 AVOCET ROAD	368	110	30					258		
4 DUNNAGANS ALLEY	60							60		
TOTAL PATHWAYS	763	181	75	170	0	0	0	412	0	
<b>B DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS</b>										
										SWU Fees
1 DRAINAGE SYSTEM REHABILITATION, MAINTENANCE, MONITORING, CREDITS, EDUCATION & NPDES II COMPLIANCE	600		Recurring			600				
TOTAL DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS	600	0	0	0	0	600	0	0	0	
<b>C ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS</b>										
		Traffic								TIF, Hosp Tax
1 MATHEWS DRIVE NORTH - ROUNDABOUT at BEACH CITY ROAD and Intersection Imps.	1,000		440					1000		
2 MEDIAN CURBING - US 278 B various locations	175		175				175			
3 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS (TIF Funded in District)	75						75			
4 F&R EMERGENCY ACCESS POINTS	90		Recurring				90			
5 MAINLAND TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS	500		500 IGA obligation				500			
6 MATHEWS DRIVE / MARSHLAND ROAD ROUNDABOUT	90							90		
TOTAL ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS	1,930	0	615	0	0	0	840	1,090	0	
<b>D PARK DEVELOPMENT</b>										
		Parks								Park Impact Fees, Sunday Liquor Permit Fees, Beach Fees & other funding sources
1 PARKS UPGRADES	380		recurring							380 County Bond (\$110k) and Sunday Liquor Permit Fees (\$270k) In house design
2 ROCK'S/REMY'S TRACT PARK (TIF)	50							50		
3										
4 ROWING & SAILING CENTER (\$1.5 million of Donations)	150									Donations
TOTAL PARK DEVELOPMENT	675	0	0	0	0	0	95	50	380	
<b>E EXISTING FACILITIES &amp; INFRASTRUCTURE</b>										
		Traffic								Hospitality Tax, Lease Acct & other sources
1 REHABILITATION & RENOVATION of FIXED CAPITAL ASSETS	351		Recurring	351						
2 CLEAN UP, SAFETY & MAINTENANCE OF TOWN PROPERTY& DEMOLITION OF UNSAFE STRUCTURES	191		Recurring	122					69	Lease Account
3 APPARATUS & VEHICLES REPLACEMENT / REFURBISHMENT	2,160		3,145	60		35	2,065			
4 FACILITIES SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS	100		500				100			
5 FIRE STATION # 1 REPLACEMENT & DEMO (Shipyard)	275		250				275			
6 FIRE STATION # 6 REPLACEMENT (Palmetto Dunes) (Hospitality Tax)	275						275			
TOTAL EXISTING FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE	3,352	0	3,895	533	0	35	2,715	0	69	

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM  
FY 2010 FUNDING SUMMARY  
(Post PC CIP Committee)**

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